THE STORY OF FRANCE

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE CONSULATE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

BY

THOMAS E. WATSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH

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PREFACE

It has been the purpose of the author to lay before the reader a clear narrative of the gradual development of a great people. No attempt has been made to fill in every detail. The larger outlines of national growth have been followed, and every material change in the condition of the kingdom has been indicated. It is hardly necessary to say that every statement in the book is supported by authority. Not only have all the standard histories been consulted, but also those numerous *Memoirs* and *Autobiographies* in which the literature of France is so peculiarly rich. To note the varying forms of government, to trace the ancient origins of modern laws and customs, to mark the encroachments of absolutism upon popular rights, to describe the long-continued struggle of the many to throw off the yoke of the few, to emphasize the corrupting influence of the union between Church and State, to illustrate once more the blighting effects of superstition, ignorance, blind obedience, unjust laws, confiscation under the disguise of unequal taxes, and the systematic plunder, year by year, of the weaker classes by the stronger, have been the motives which led to the enormous labour involved in this book.

May the labour bear some little fruit.

Thomson, Georgia,
November 27, 1898.

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INTRODUCTION

AS long as men continue to find interest in the annals of the past, the Story of France will command especial attention. No other modern nation has undergone changes more frequent, more radical, more sudden, bloody, and dramatic. In forms of government, France has boxed the compass, — has been feudal, monarchical, imperial, republican, and revolutionary. She has sounded the depths of royal absolutism and of communistic anarchy; has made and unmade constitutions in the pathetic effort to get one that would fit; has known a military despotism, which bluntly told the women to marry and bear children in order that Napoleon might be continuously supplied with troops; has known an absolute monarchy, where a graceful manner was more effective at court than a head well filled with sense; and has known a government of the rabble, under which there was an insurrection against property, and death sentences passed against citizens for the sin of wearing aristocratic names and clean shirts.

No land has given birth to men more great, more good, more brave; none has been cursed with men more vile. No people have climbed higher in the arduous pathway of victory; none have been so pitilessly stricken down in defeat.

To no nation has it been given to illustrate more fully the fact that civilization is but skin-deep, and that the

savage lurks within us yet. In his days of barbarism the Gaul, more brutal than the Indian, cut off the entire head of his victims in war, and hung it on his horse's neck as a trophy, or nailed it to his door for good luck. After some centuries of Christianity, the son of this same Gaul, the savage within him having been let loose again by the Revolution, chopped off the heads of "aristocrats," male and female, and bore them along the streets of Paris, Marseilles, Orleans, and Versailles in bloody triumph, amid exultant songs and dancing. France has furnished the epic poem of modern history. She has been the theatre of a colossal drama, which all nations have watched with bated breath, and which has profoundly affected the destinies of the human race. In no other country has the entire political fabric been torn down and rebuilt; in no other land have dreamers, armed with resistless power, attempted to fashion a government according to theories contained in a book — to clothe mankind politically after a pattern cut out by a half-crazy theorist. In no other country has a desperate effort been made to enthrone the gospel of anarchy and communism, according to which everything belongs to everybody in general and to nobody in particular. In no other country has the opposite theory been so absolutely dominant and the king so unrestrainedly in possession of everything — life, liberty, property, law, and religion. No other modern land has known a Napoleon, none other a Marat, none other a Talleyrand. In Marengo and Austerlitz, the French have supplied the world with the synonyms of dazzling success; in Waterloo, they have given a name for hopeless, overwhelming defeat.

They have marched triumphant, with flags flying and

bands playing, into almost every capital in Europe; and the nations of Europe have marched time and again, with flags flying, into the capital of the French.

After all changes, France is still great, still progressive, still holding its way onward, abreast of the other great Powers in the march of human development.

Surely the record of such a people must abound in lessons worth learning, heroisms worth knowing, facts which warn, which enlighten, which profoundly interest all thoughtful men.

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THE STORY OF FRANCE

CHAPTER I

THE GAULS

THEIR MANNERS, CUSTOMS, RELIGION, AND GOVERNMENT; CÆSAR'S CONQUEST OF GAUL

NO one can tell with certainty what people originally dwelt in France. The first authentic accounts we have picture to us a land darkened by immense forests, watered by rivers which freeze in winter, and inhabited by numerous tribes of men who are almost as savage as the wild beasts which roam the trackless woods.

A remnant of these original inhabitants still survives in the Basques, — a simple, industrious, and honest people whose home is in the Pyrenees of Spain. To this day they preserve their ancient customs, manners, and language; and are noted for the bravery of their men and the modesty of their women. They were driven out of France by the Celts, or Gauls, a horde of marauders who had come into the country from the direction of Germany, but who are supposed to have emigrated from central Asia. B.C. 600

These Gauls were not mere savages, as Roman historians have pretended. Even at that early day, when the Romans themselves were going about with nothing on their legs but hide and hair, the Gauls were wearing

breeches. As a starting-point for comparisons, this undisputed fact gives us encouragement and strength. Besides breeches, the Gauls wore a tunic, covering shoulders and chest, and a striped cloak resembling the plaid of the Scotch Highlander.

Golden armlets and girdles were not uncommon among the Gaulish chiefs, and in battle they wore a helmet of brass, a breastplate, and a shield. Like the American Indians, they shouted their war-whoop as they rushed upon their enemies, and the triumphant Celt, not content with the scalp of his foe, took the entire head, as the best possible guarantee that that particular enemy was dead.

The Celt has never been a conspicuously successful farmer. He cleared comparatively few fields for the plough; he built few towns and cities. He dwelt in caves and rude huts, and he roamed with his herds of cattle from one pasture to another, living upon the flesh of the wild beasts he hunted and bartering their skins to the Italian or Grecian or Phœnician merchant for trinkets, or strong drink, just as the Indians did in the good old days when our honoured ancestors could get land worth a thousand dollars in exchange for a gun warranted not to shoot, or a string of beautiful red beads worth ten cents.

The chiefs might live in strong log houses and possess considerable wealth in cattle, horses, hogs, and precious metals, but the masses were wretchedly poor. Physically the Gauls were tall and strong, blue-eyed and light-haired. They were terrible in battle, but if repulsed, or beaten, they almost immediately lost heart, and fell into panic and ruinous retreat.

Not content with the amount of fighting they constantly had on hand at home, they carried their arms as far into

other countries as their limited knowledge of geography would justify. We find them invading Greece, checked at Thermopylæ, but flanking the pass by the same secret path which was betrayed to Xerxes. We find them overthrowing a Grecian king and plundering the temple at Delphi. B.C. 278
We find them marauding in Asia, terrorizing and plundering the effeminate citizens of the rich cities bordering the Bosphorus. We find them invading Spain and establishing themselves there. We see them come face to face with Alexander the Great on the Danube. "What do the Gauls most fear?" asked the young king of a deputation of Gaulish chiefs which had visited his camp out of curiosity. "We fear nothing," answered the Gauls, proudly, "unless it be the fall of the skies; but we value the friendship of a man like you."

To Rome the Gauls were a constant terror. Time and again the fierce chiefs led their half-naked followers over the Alps, swooped down upon the vine-clad slopes of Italy, ravaged the plains, sacked the towns, and almost rubbed the Roman name off the map. So fixed was this fear of the Gauls, so permanent the danger, that a definite portion of the yearly revenues of Rome was set apart for defence against these dreaded and hereditary foes.

In the year 390 B.C., the Gauls captured Rome itself B.C. 390
and held it for nine months. Only the citadel escaped, and that too would have fallen, say the Roman writers, had not some patriotic geese given timely warning to the defenders of the stealthy approach of the Gauls, who were about to take it by surprise. Finally, the Romans hired the Gauls to go away; and, as the barbarian army was marching home, the Romans, under Camillus, perfidiously assailed it, and inflicted heavy losses.

Twenty-three years afterwards they were again in the Roman territories, with fire and sword, carrying terror and conquest to the very walls of Rome. For twelve years they occupied the outlying country and kept the Romans cooped up within the narrow limits of their capital. Finally, these Gauls withdrew, and made permanent settlements in the valleys of the Po.

B.C. 278 When Hannibal crossed the Alps, on his famous march against Rome, the Gauls in great numbers followed him. They formed the flower of his troops, and to their splendid cavalry, especially, he owed his success. Thirty thousand Gauls fought with him at Cannæ; and of the 5500 men that Hannibal lost 4000 were Gauls. It was by their aid that the wonderful Carthaginian held his ground so many years in Italy, and brought Rome to the very brink of

B.C. 202 ruin. Even after the tide turned against Hannibal, and he crossed over to Africa to fight and lose his last great battle, at Zama, the Gauls were true to him and composed one-third of his army.

Those brave people had no real military discipline. Their weapons were rude clubs, axes, swords, spears, and knives. They rushed into battle like a disorderly mob — each man yelling his battle-cry. Only the chiefs and the higher orders rode horses. Their vehicles were huge carts with two wheels — the entire wheel being one piece of wood. Oxen did the pulling. When the Gaulish army marched, the women and children went along in the wagons. During a battle the wagons were massed in the rear, and the men fought in sight of their wives. In case the day went against them, the wagons became an object of attack, and the women defended them with desperate courage.

Among the Gauls, women were free to choose their husbands, but the husband had the power of life and death over wife and child.

Sometimes a chief, wishing to marry off a daughter, would give a great feast, and invite all the eligible youths round about. In that event, it was the custom for the girl to appear at the end of the banquet, bearing in her hand a cup of wine. After inspecting the various candidates for her hand, the damsel would give the cup to him she preferred, and the fortunate man thus got both the wine and the woman.

The city of Marseilles was founded by a Greek, who stumbled upon a wife at one of these marriage feasts.

A Gaulish chief, named Nann, who lived near the sea-coast, had a daughter for whom he wished to find a husband; and he straightway prepared the usual banquet, inviting thereto all the young men of the neighbourhood who were suitable for sons-in-law.

A Grecian ship having come into port near by, Nann invited the Greeks also; and they came.

The feast seems to have been a success in every way; and after the roasted cow, stewed hog, parched acorns, and other native delicacies had been duly devoured, and immersed in liquids whose chief virtue was that they would "make drunk come," the blushing daughter of Nann entered the room, bringing the cup of wine.

The principal man among the Greek strangers was a youth named Euxenes. To the great relief, or dismay, as the case may be, of the Gauls who were candidates for her hand, the maiden, Gyptos by name, stopped in front of Euxenes and gave him the wine.

He submitted meekly, married Nann's daughter, made

B.C. 600–587 her a good husband, settled among her people, founded the city of Marseilles, brought over other Greeks, and when his wife's brother, years afterwards, Nann having died in the meantime, tried to take him by surprise and exterminate the colony, he surprised this brother and slew him.

This Greek colony at Marseilles allied itself to Rome, and became, eventually, a thorn in the flesh to Gaul. It was through this channel that Roman interference with affairs across the Alps first came.

The Gauls were densely ignorant, and, therefore, superstitious. Their priests, the Druids, practised upon this ignorance, and drew power and revenue from the superstition which they fostered.

These Druids exercised supreme authority over all classes, administered justice, and dictated the laws. Their place of worship was the dim and solemn grove. The oak was sacred to them, and the mistletoe which grew upon it was supposed to possess miraculous healing properties. In the gloomy depths of vast forests, the Druids practised religious ceremonies and offered up human sacrifices to their God. Sometimes the victim perished slowly, horribly, under the knife; at other times he was enclosed in a basketwork of wooden strips and perished slowly, horribly, in the flames.

Isolated though they were, the Druids had somehow got hold of the doctrine, so precious to priests of olden times, that God dearly loves the smell of human blood, the sound of human groans.

Previous to the time of the Druids, the tribes had worshipped nature and the sun, moon, and stars; the Druids taught that there was one Supreme Ruler, and that the soul of man did not die, but passed out of one man into

another, and so was immortal. They offered no proofs upon this subject, but to doubt it was heresy and death.

The Druids elected one of their order as ruler over all. His authority was unlimited. It was a fundamental doctrine of this religion that no priest should serve in the army or pay taxes, — a doctrine, by the way, which seems to be as ancient as organized religion itself. Any citizen who fell under their displeasure could be cut off from all association with his fellows, or, as we should say, excommunicated.

Associated with the Druids were the bards and the soothsayers. Just as the Scotch Highlanders, later, loved the minstrel and believed in the second sight, so their brethren across the water loved the bard and believed in the soothsayer.

There were no written records of the race among the Gauls; the story of the clan, the tales of its adventures, the great deeds of the heroic dead, the memory of the past, with its glories and its sorrows, its inspiration and its lessons, all rested in the rhymed legends handed down orally from bard to bard through countless generations.

It was the bard who sang at the rude festival, who chanted the praise of the chief in his hall, who wailed the funeral dirge, who told in melody, and with alliteration, which took the place of rhyme, the deeds of the brave and the virtues of the fair.

It was the bard, wandering about with his tymbal or his harp, who was the literature of the simple-minded Gaul. The veneration paid him by these ignorant, undeveloped people awakes within us the same feeling which moves us when we see the few poor flowers which the wife of the peasant has planted at the door of her leaky hut.

We recognize the inborn craving of the human heart for the beautiful and the elevating.

No Walter Scott has left in imperishable rhyme the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" of Gaul, but he is a pathetic figure, nevertheless, standing there in bold relief on the darkening background of bygone times, revered by his people, preserving the traditions of his race, inflaming the warrior to battle, or chanting, amid the deep and shadowy woods, his rugged hymns to God.

The soothsayers were, likewise, venerated, as they foretold what was going to happen. They did this by watching the flight of birds. They had rules which were known at that time to be infallible; and if a certain number of birds flew at a certain time, in a certain way, the soothsayer could tell the uninitiated citizen what was to befall him. If the thing which was foretold happened according to the prediction, this was a sure sign that the soothsayer was divinely guided. If the thing foretold did not happen as predicted, this was a sign that the uninitiated citizen had not exercised the proper amount of faith. In such cases he had nobody but himself to blame for his disappointment.

At other times, when these soothsayers were asked to foretell the future, they would search for information inside some goat or calf.

The priests of the ancient religions devoutly believed that God hid the records of future events in the entrails of certain animals. Inasmuch as the priests stoutly maintained this creed from generation to generation, and threatened with divine wrath any scoffer who might deny it, the doctrine met with universal acceptance, being handed down piously from sire to son. In elegant, cult-

ured Rome, as well as in rude, unlettered Gaul, the spell of the priest hypnotized the minds of men, and no citizen, however bold, dared openly to doubt that the secret of the future could be unveiled by ripping open the stomach of some unoffending goat.

If a prediction made in this manner happened to be verified, the roots of the faith took firmer hold than ever; if things went in the opposite direction, it only showed that proper faith had not been exercised. Thus, in any possible event, the priest serenely mastered the situation — and, at his leisure, cooked and ate the goat.

We have seen that Gaul was peopled by many clans, each with its chief, and each independent of the other. There was no king over them all.

Below the chiefs came the gentry, composed of those who owned and rode horses. They were called riders, and they were a privileged class. Like the chiefs, they were hard fighters, ravenous eaters, and extensively capable drinkers.

Below this lazy, sensual, insolent, privileged class came the common people, who were mostly serfs, or slaves, and who did all of the manual labour. They fought for the lord when he called them to the wars; and, in times of peace, they fed him, clothed him, housed him, and bent humbly downwards when he condescended to pass by.

Sometimes these slaves had the honour of being killed at their lord's funeral, and burnt on the same pyre, along with his armour, his dogs, and his horses. The idea was that the lord, upon arriving in the next world, would be gratified at finding his slaves ready to serve him there as they had done here.

But high as was the station of the chiefs, that of the

Druids was higher still. Representing God, claiming divine power, practising mysterious rites, they exercised over the minds of nobles and people a despotic tyranny, based on ignorance and cemented by the blood of human sacrifice.

Greeks, Romans, Persians, and other older peoples professed a contempt for ruder nations, and rarely gave truthful accounts of them; but in comparing the Celts, or Gauls, with those who pretended to monopolize the national virtues of those ages there is one tremendous fact to be remembered. The Greeks, Egyptians, and Asiatics generally, and, for at least one short period, the Romans, fell into the depths of phallic worship, and the Gauls, Goths, Huns, and Vandals never did. It was in the exquisite porticos of Greece and amid the delicious refinements of Asiatic luxury, that men of the most cultured, but effeminate tastes worshipped the God of drunkenness, and the Goddess of illicit love.

Brutal as the Gaul might be, his vices were those of a man; he did not cultivate self-abasement and make it a fine art. His was the lust of strong, natural passion; his drunkenness was fitful, like his fighting; he did not elevate his vices into a religion, as did the highly civilized nobles of Asia, Greece, and Rome.

By the law of nations, as practised by Greeks and Romans, the stranger, unless a guest, was an enemy, who might be killed without ceremony. The Gauls, on the other hand, threw open the door to him, invited him to the feast, and gave Greece and Rome an immensely important lesson in humanity and hospitality.

The tribal system does not encourage national development, and the Gauls were no exceptions to the rule.

Agriculture was primitive, and manufactures limited to the simplest forms.

A few iron mines were worked; a small quantity of gold was washed from the mountain streams; and ornamental work in silver was done on a small scale.

A few walled towns existed, and many open villages. Roads and bridges made commercial intercourse convenient. As a matter of fact, these Gauls were the first people who ever attempted ocean traffic in sailing vessels. They had a regular trade, through this means, with the tin mines of England hundreds of years before Christ.

Had it not been for the despotic tyranny of the priests, and the selfish, brutal policy of their chieftains, these Celts might have developed a splendid civilization. They belonged to the same family as the Irish of to-day. They were brave, and proud, and imaginative. They loved poetry and song. Their conception of religion, in its essential thought, was nearer the truth than that of most of the older people. They were faithful to treaties, true to friends, and fair to foes. But, under their system of government, religious and political, their fine individual qualities were offered no opportunities for expanding into national greatness.

Another thing which made it impossible for the Gauls to achieve civilization was the want of money. Produce found no market, and therefore production found no stimulus. The chiefs coined a small quantity of metallic money, but it was not enough to encourage commerce. When a clumsy wooden vessel, with almost sublime courage, braved the dangers of the English Channel and sought traffic with the tin mines in England, it was Gaulish prod-

uce which was exchanged for British produce. It was a rude barter of commodities in bulk.

As long as commerce is bound down to these limits, it can do little. It is only when we advance from the stage of barter to that of sales, that we can so stimulate commerce as to develop the resources of a country.

The common people in Gaul had to go to the chiefs and the nobles for money, and were compelled to accept whatever terms were imposed. These conditions were so hard that to fall into debt was equivalent to lapsing into slavery.

As a proof of the extreme scarcity of money and the value it possessed in comparison with human life, historians tell us that a citizen would sometimes pledge his life for a sum of money and then, when the "day of judgment" came, would silently offer his neck to the sword of the executioner.

B.C. 300 About 300 years before the Christian era, the chiefs made an effort to rid themselves of the tyranny of the Druids. Taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, the common people, particularly those of the towns, attempted to throw off the yoke of the chiefs. Civil war ensued. The Druids took sides with the people against the chiefs. In some tribes, the chief made himself king; in others, the nobles were overthrown, and a democratic government adopted. The people maintained the right to meet in public assemblies, to discuss public affairs.

This revolution might have been lastingly beneficial to the Gauls in the course of time, but its immediate result was to increase internal feuds, and render national union impossible.

We know very little about the internal affairs of Gaul, because they were a people who kept no records. When

the bard died, the primitive archives of the nation were gone.

We do know, however, that the country eventually became densely populated, that agriculture flourished, that towns multiplied, and that commerce and manufactures slowly and painfully came into existence. Those great cities of modern France, Lyons, Marseilles, Orleans, Bordeaux, Paris, were thriving towns long before the Roman Conquest. In fact, the Romans had begun to look upon the fertile province with longing eyes — having for it the same desire that the Christian nations of Europe, at the present day, have for heathen lands where the soil is good and the natives weak.

The trade of Gaul was in the hands of the Roman merchants, and the Italian usurer had spread his net all over the land. Many of the fruitful farms had passed into the ownership of absentee Roman landlords, for in business affairs the unlettered native was no match for the Italian speculator. For a jar of wine, the Roman could buy a slave; for a gaudy cloak, a field. B.C. 100

Rome at this time was still moving onward in her career of conquest, but she was torn by factions at home. Ambitious party-chiefs fiercely contended for supremacy. The Roman forum had become familiar with riots and corrupt elections.

Marius and Sylla had already fought out their feud, and, alternately, made the streets of the Sacred City run with Roman blood. Catiline had already conspired; and the long and splendid career of the cruel, but dauntless Roman Republic was drawing to a close. B.C. 82 B.C. 62

Roman senators were corrupt; Roman governors were corrupt; Roman aristocracy was corrupt; Roman democracy

was corrupt. The soil was ready to receive the tree which Cæsar was to plant: military despotism.

Appointments in the service of the state were sought in order that private fortunes might be made. Provinces were plundered with pitiless rapacity. Senatorial votes were sold with shameless frequency; verdicts were bought and sold in the courts; peace had its price, and so had war. The greed for money, the craving for luxury, the wild chase after sensual pleasures, were gnawing with fatal vigour at the very vitals of the Roman state.

Cæsar himself had been a libertine, a gambler, a spendthrift, a conspirator. Related to Marius and friendly to Catiline, he had come to maturity amid scenes of vice, of disorder, and of crime. An aristocrat of the highest rank, a senator by birth, a politician by nature, he had had every opportunity to look into the deepest mysteries of the body politic, and he may already have formed the design of winning military renown, amassing treasure, bribing or overthrowing rivals, and seizing with iron hand the helm of a distracted state.

B.C. 58–50 Be this as it may, it is certain that no conqueror ever turned his opportunities more remorselessly into cash than did Cæsar when he invaded and conquered Gaul. He was one of the boldest money-hunters that ever plundered a temple, confiscated an estate, or sold a nation under the hammer of the auctioneer.

He and all his friends amassed fortunes in the campaign — partly from the seizure of lands, partly from the spoliation of towns, partly from the plunder of temples, and partly by selling into slavery 1,500,000 human beings whose only offence was that they had fought for their homes.

It would not serve my purpose to describe the marches, and the battles, and the intrigues, by which Cæsar, at the head of a disciplined army, subdued disorderly mobs of Gauls, led on by jealous chieftains. It is enough to say that he took more than eighty towns by storm, conquered 300 tribes, fought, during the eight years, 13,000,000 of men, destroyed 1,000,000 on the field of battle, and sold 1,500,000 into slavery.

During the entire conflict the Gauls were never able to concentrate and utilize their strength. Like the Scottish clans, they were eternally split up by tribal hatreds. Cæsar was able to keep them divided and to have under his eagles, in nearly every engagement, a large body of Gaulish auxiliaries, fighting their own countrymen.

Only one great leader appeared on the Gaulish side during the struggle. This was Vercingetorix, a chieftain of the Arvernians. After the strength of his countrymen had been almost exhausted by six years of warfare, conducted by separate clans, he succeeded in organizing a general confederacy against the Roman oppressors. At first he was successful. He defeated Cæsar in battle and brought him almost to ruin. But the jealousies of the chieftains weakened the hands of the great patriotic leader, and his army surrendered. He might have escaped, but he scorned to do so. He offered to deliver himself to the Romans as a sacrifice for his people. His officers meanly accepted his offer.

Mounted on his horse and fully armed, he rode into Cæsar's camp, rode round the tribunal upon which Cæsar was sitting to receive him, then dismounted and put away his weapons, and sat down, in silence, at Cæsar's feet — making with his hands a mute appeal for mercy.

The sacrifice was grandly patriotic, but extremely foolish. It accomplished nothing whatever, except the captivity and death of a brave man who deserved to live. He was kept in prison at Rome ten years, till Cæsar's wars with Pompey and his adherents were ended. Then he was led in triumph in the procession at the celebration of Cæsar's victories, and while the successful usurper was returning thanks to his gods, on Capitol Hill, the unsuccessful patriot had his head struck off in the dungeon below.

Thus ran the stern old Roman maxim: "Væ victis"—woe to the vanquished.

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CHAPTER II

GAUL AS A ROMAN PROVINCE

Migration of Tribes and Invasions of the Goths and Huns

WHEREVER Rome extended her power, she imposed her laws, her language, and her learning. With questions of religion she rarely meddled, unless they interfered with her administration.

In Gaul, the Roman rule soon effected great changes. The country was divided into provinces and put under imperial tax-collectors and governors. The city of Lyons became its capital, and the emperors frequently resided there and made it the scene of magnificent display and adornment. Fine public buildings were erected, a mint for the coinage of money established, splendid walls were built to protect it from without, and theatres and marble baths embellished it within. Great roads were opened, while schools were founded in the cities, and the rude nobility began to attend them. Manufactories were encouraged, and the cloth made in Gaul was soon in demand in all parts of the empire. Law courts were established according to the Roman rule, and the Latin language took the place of the Celtic — except in Brittany, where the original tongue survives to this day, just as it does in Wales and in parts of Ireland.

The Druids were suppressed because they practised human sacrifices, and also because they meddled with state

affairs. They were eternally hatching schemes to throw off the Roman yoke and reimpose their own. For many years after they were prohibited by law from offering up human beings on the altar, they continued those ghastly ceremonies in secret.

Agriculture was encouraged. Sheep took the place of wild hogs, and cultivated fields gradually supplanted unfenced pastures. In the time of Cæsar the climate of Gaul was very severe. The great rivers often froze over with ice so thick that armies could cross without danger.

The vine and the olive were unknown. The climate was too cold for them. But as the vast, dismal woods were gradually cut away the temperature grew milder. The vine and the olive were planted in the southern portion of the land, and pushed, step by step, all over it. The result is that for many centuries the wine of France has been famous throughout the world, and her olives form one of her most valuable crops. Instead of being considered a dismal, chilly, and dangerous climate, France is now one of the sunniest and healthiest of lands, so great has been the change wrought by the axe and the plough.

The Romans utilized the courage of the Gauls by enlisting them in their armies. The infantry thus obtained was good, but the cavalry was unrivalled. In fact, Cæsar owed much of his success in all his wars, especially his late ones, to the Gallic soldiers.

After subduing them he had treated them with the clemency of a broad-minded statesman, and he even admitted Gallic nobles into the Roman Senate, — an act which drew down upon him the intense hatred of the exclusive aristocracy of Rome, and furnished one of the motives for his murder.

Many of the Gauls had the Roman franchise bestowed upon them, and many of their cities enjoyed special privileges granted by the emperors. During these years of Roman supremacy, the nobles of Gaul built splendid castles along the Rhine and Moselle, and lived in great luxury. They sent their young men to the Roman schools, and the educational course was not considered complete till a visit had been made to Rome and to the emperor's court.

Thus things went, in the upper world. With the actual labourers in Gaul, life was not so pleasant. In nearly all cases the man who followed the plough was a serf. He was bound to the soil, and, when the estate was sold, he went with it, just as the other plough-tools did. No school opened its doors to him. No hope of promotion invited his ambition. Only in the army could a poor man, born of the peasants, expect to hew his way to the front, and even in the army it was extremely rare that a peasant rose to distinction.

Yet, to make his lot severer, taxes were heavier on land and produce than on anything else, and the tax-collector had almost unlimited power.

As illustrative of the times, we are told by historians that Cæsar had liberated a slave named Licinius, and had given him an office. He was so useful to his Roman masters that he was promoted, and finally became one of the tax-collectors under Cæsar's nephew, Augustus. Licinius was a robber, and had been so exceedingly cruel and greedy in his exactions, that when the emperor came into Gaul the people indignantly denounced their oppressor. The emperor decided to punish the scoundrel, but was led away from his purpose by a shrewd trick. Licinius carried

the emperor to the vaults where his plunder was stored, and said: "Behold the treasure I have gathered. I was afraid if Gauls kept so much gold they would use it against thee. I now deliver it to thee."

Augustus received the stolen goods, and let the thief go his way unpunished. Of course Licinius, when the emperor had returned to Rome, went on robbing the helpless people worse than ever.

Such instances as this prove the abuses to which the Roman government was subject, and we can imagine how the spirit of a brave people was worn away and broken by it. There was more wealth in Gaul than there had been, but the national spirit had nothing round which it could build a civilization which would improve the entire people morally, as well as materially. The Gaulish nobles erected splendid temples, but they were dedicated to pagan gods. The religion of the Druids had been suppressed, but no better one had been introduced. The minds of the people were left without a single great motive power which could elevate them to nobler things.

Devoured by taxes and social oppressions of every sort, the working classes rose in rebellion against the government. A writer of those times, Lactantius, describes the causes of the outbreak in these words: —

"So enormous had the taxes become that the strength of the tiller of the soil was exhausted; fields became deserts, and farms were changed into forests. The tax-collectors measured the land by the clod; trees, vines, were all counted; the cattle were marked, the people registered. Old age or sickness was no excuse; the sick and the infirm were brought up; every one's age was put down; a few years were added to that of the children, and taken off

from that of the aged. Meanwhile the cattle decreased, the people died, and there was no deduction made for the dead."

The wrongs were great, the cause was good, but the heaviest battalions won, as usual, and the imperial armies put down, with disciplined inhumanity, the insurrection of the oppressed.

Under the Emperor Augustus, Gaulish nobles were excluded from the Roman Senate, but Claudius, who was born in Gaul, readmitted them, and they steadily continued to occupy civil and military positions of the highest importance. Gaulish generals commanded Roman armies; Gaulish nobles influenced imperial policies. The imperial purple itself was worn by several natives of Gaul; and the wisest and best of all the emperors, Antoninus Pius, was a Gaul, who had risen to the mastership of the Roman world.

Numerous attempts were made by the Gauls to throw off the yoke, but the Roman legions were not yet to be withstood.

One of these revolts occurred in the reign of Nero — the last of the twelve Roman emperors called "the Cæsars," and a monster of cruelty and lust.

The leader of the insurrection was Vindex, the son of a Romanized Gaul, whose father had become a Roman senator. The time was ripe for revolt. Universal unrest prevailed among all classes of people, and the commingled atrocities and buffooneries of Nero had provoked profound hatred and contempt. A.D. 68–70

Vindex denounced the emperor in public harangues, holding him up to scorn and righteous wrath. Nero had murdered his closest friends, his wife, his concubine, his

mother; had crimsoned the sands of the amphitheatre with the innocent blood of Christian martyrs; had turned the Golden House into a vast brothel, where he publicly caroused with privileged libertines; and had degraded even his mad thirst for blood by a madder thirst for theatrical accomplishments and slavish applause.

Vindex arraigned him for all this; arraigned him as tyrant, murderer, monster of cruelty, and contemptible buffoon.

The people of Gaul flew to arms, and Vindex was soon at the head of 100,000 men.

When Nero heard of the insurrection, he was enjoying himself at one of the imperial villas near Rome; and he was disposed to take a cheerful view of the situation. The thought of the confiscations, which would follow the suppression of the revolt, filled him with the delights of anticipation. He sank back into his sensual sloth, and let the flames of rebellion spread.

Vindex led his untrained mob into the field, was met by the highly disciplined legions of Rome, and was defeated. In the hurry and excitement of the moment, he committed suicide. Had he waited ever so short a time, he would have witnessed the downfall and death of Nero, and the independence of Gaul might have been won while contending claimants were battling for the vacant throne.

One of the chieftains who were engaged in the rebellion which Vindex had stirred up claimed to be a great-grandson of an illegitimate child of Julius Cæsar. His name was Sabinus. After the defeat and death of Vindex, he took refuge in the vaults of his palace, and caused a faithful slave to burn down the house above, and to spread the

report that he was dead. Only two servants knew the secret and the way into the vaults.

Even the wife of Sabinus supposed him dead till the slaves told her the truth. At night she would visit her husband, stealing away again when day approached, and thus the two lived for nine long years. Several children were born to them in those dark, underground vaults.

Then, in an evil hour they set out to Rome, to ask pardon of the emperor — scarcely doubting that after so many years the imperial wrath would be cooled. Vespasian occupied the Roman throne at that time. To his eternal shame, he rejected the plea for mercy, and ordered that Sabinus should be put to death. His wife asked to share his fate. "I have been more happy with him," said she, "under the ground, out of the light of day, than thou hast been in all the splendour of thine empire." The cruel monarch granted her request, and the husband and wife died together.

There is a well-known painting, frequently reproduced, which means a multitude of things to him who studies it well. Its scene is the imperial palace at Ravenna, where Honorius, one of the last of the Roman emperors of the West, has taken up his residence. The emperor himself is represented seated upon his chair of state. He looks languid, fatuous, elegantly null. He is petting and feeding some tame pigeons. His courtiers stand about him deeply absorbed in the imperial pastime. A little further away, as though they had just entered the door, are some envoys, messengers who bear evil tidings. They are bowing and scraping before the emperor, waiting till he shall have wearied of his labours with the pet doves. They are there to tell him that the Goths have revolted,

and are dismembering his empire. They are there to remind him that the twelve centuries allotted by an ancient prediction as the time of the dominion of Rome have well-nigh expired, and that the shadow of Attila and his Huns is about to fall upon the terror-stricken world.

The riches of a plundered universe had poured in upon the Roman Empire and corrupted it to the very core. In Rome and in Constantinople, the two capitals, the same life was led, and every conceivable license given to the baser appetites of men. Fabulously splendid palaces were reared in which the nights were given to debauchery, the days to sleep, idleness, or aimless recreation. In the loveliest gardens of the world, revels took place which would have shamed a savage. In splendid banquet halls, gluttony went to lengths which would have disgusted a hungry beast. Private life was tainted beyond redemption; and the public service fed harpies from one end of the empire to the other.

Romans would no longer enlist and fight, so barbarians were hired to defend the enfeebled libertines.

Slaves infested every palace and farm in fabulous numbers. Four hundred often served in one household; 4000 belonged to the average estate of the noble. The Roman aristocrat depended on his slaves for everything; they must wash him, clothe him, wait upon him, read to him, sing to him, bear him through the streets, cater to his appetites, and minister to his lusts. The Roman himself was become too effeminate for any task whatsoever involving robust manhood.

For a brief season, barbarians will hire themselves to fight barbarians, and thus a tottering throne may be supported. Stilicho, the Vandal, is the prop of Honorius

just as Theodoric, the Visigoth, and Merovius, the Frank, aided Aëtius, the Scythian, on the Catalaunian plains in turning back the horde of invading Huns; and just as Arbogast, the Frank, had upheld the Emperor Eugenius. After a while, some Goth, like Odoacer, will tire of the farce; and he will take the crown off the head of the worthless Roman, and put it on his own.

All this we may think of, as we gaze upon the picture where Honorius feeds poultry, and bowing messengers wait to tell him that the Goths are in revolt, and the Roman world falling to pieces.

Toward the middle of the second century after Christ, there had appeared evidences of a great movement among the people whom the Romans called barbarians. Strange tribes, in vast numbers, began to press upon the borders of the empire, and to tax the utmost energies of the emperors to hold them in check.

It was a remarkable thing to see great nations moving in a body from one country to another; men, women, children, cattle, household goods, all moving at once. What the true causes of these migrations were we shall never know. It is supposed, however, that the wild hordes on the great plains of central Asia gave the first impulse to the onward tide. On the one hand, it beat against the frontiers of China on the extreme east, and, on the other, it swept over the borders of the Roman world on the extreme west.

The people who gave rise to this mighty commotion, this almost universal migratory movement, belonged to the same race as the Tartars, or Mongols. They were low in stature, wild in appearance, ugly in visage, and ruthless in conduct. They carried terror wherever they went,

and it was the boast of one of their leaders that no grass ever grew where his horse had trod. Pushing round the Black Sea, and crossing the mighty rivers which pour into it, they pressed onward to the Danube and the Rhine, forcing before them the nations which occupied these regions. The Goths were driven almost bodily out of their territory, and compelled to seek shelter within the Roman borders. The Vandals, the Sueves, the Burgundians, the Alans, all pushed forward to seize new homes, and found lodgment in Spain, Gaul, Italy, and Germany.

A.D. 410 Alaric, the Gothic king, in the year 410, captured Rome itself, and organized several of its provinces into his kingdom.

Genseric, the Vandal, established an empire in the Roman provinces of Africa, and made Carthage his capital.

A.D. 455 In the year 455, he anchored his fleet in the Tiber and landed his troops for the pillage of Rome. He seized upon its wealth, and carried away thousands of captives. Among his treasures were the golden table and the golden candlestick brought by Titus from Jerusalem. He also bore away to Carthage the Christian Empress Eudoxia, whose wrongs and whose invitation had brought the Vandals to the walls of Rome. The lives of the citizens were spared at the intercession of the Pope.

Many centuries before, Rome had cruelly and vindictively waged war against Carthage; had burnt the proud city to the ground; had driven the plough over her streets, and sown the site with salt. Behold the changes of the slow-moving years! Carthage was once more a great city, and had pillaged every temple and palace in Rome.

The most dreaded of all these hurrying and shifting nations were the Huns, whose Asiatic origin and appear-

ance I have already described. Their greatest leader was Attila, a man who inspired such fear that his enemies named him "the scourge of God."

He established a huge kingdom in what is now called Russia, Austria, Hungary, and Germany; and founded a capital city on the bank of the Danube, which in our day is called Buda. He was no mere savage or marauder. He was a great organizer of peoples, and a general of ability.

On the soil of France, his onward career of conquest was permanently checked in the year 451.

In the battle of Châlons, the mighty host of Attila and his Huns was met by the army of the Romans, Gauls, Franks, and Visigoths, who had combined to resist the invaders. The struggle was tremendous, and it is said that 165,000 men were slain. A.D. 451

Attila was defeated, but was still so formidable that, as he sullenly withdrew from the French territory, his enemies did not dare to attack him. Returning to his capital, he soon after stormed and sacked the city of Aquileia and threatened to storm Rome itself. He was only deterred from his purpose by the intercession of Pope Leo, and by the payment of a very large sum of money. A.D. 452

This great ruler of men lived some two years longer, and then died in his rude palace one night, after he had celebrated, with much eating and drinking, his marriage with a beautiful girl whom he wished to add to his already large number of wives. A.D. 453

The battle of Châlons is called one of the decisive battles of the world, because it put a stop to the tide of Asiatic conquest. It was a struggle of the Western peoples, their laws, religion, and civilization, against the savage

onslaught of the Mongolian hordes. When the sun set on that fearful day, the issue was decided. The Eastern tide rolled back. The West, with its Roman laws, Roman culture, its German ideas of individual freedom, and its religion of Jesus Christ, was left to work its way, onward and upward, to civilization.

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CHAPTER III

THE FRANKS

TOWARD the close of the fifth century appeared the Franks, — robust, fearless, dominant, — and before their resistless march fell degenerate Romans and Gauls alike. A.D. 481

What a picture of barbaric strength do they present as they come bursting through the feeble defences of the Roman frontiers, and seizing upon the rich domains of the tottering empire! Clothed in the skins of bears, seals, and wild boars; their triangular line of battle presenting a bristling mass of javelins; their huge chariots; their fierce looks, wild cries, shaggy hair, huge stature — all combine to make a spectacle at once savage and fascinating.

Hear their battle hymn: —

"Pharamond! Pharamond! We have fought with the sword.

"We have hurled the battle-axe; sweat ran from the brows of the warriors and trickled down their arms.

"The eagles screamed with joy; the crows swam in the blood of the slain; all ocean was but a wound.

"The virgins long have wept. Pharamond! Pharamond! We have fought with the sword.

"Our fathers fell in battle; the vultures croaked, and our fathers feasted them with carnage.

"Let us choose wives whose milk shall be blood, and shall fill with valour the heart of our sons.

"Pharamond! The song of the bard is ended; life passes away; we will smile when we must die."

Thus sang the fearless warriors who had come marching from Germany to wrest land from weaker men; and as the battle hymn swelled from 40,000 throats the horsemen raised and lowered their white shields in cadence, and at each return of the chorus, "Pharamond! We have fought," they clashed their iron javelins upon their iron-clad breasts.

The Franks were divided into many different groups, but they were all alike in general characteristics, and they all belonged to the great Germanic family.

They were warriors, pure and simple. Tall, strong, brave, and adventurous, they became preëminent even among their own daring kindred peoples. Fair-haired and blue-eyed, they differed from the Gauls in being more resolute, steady, and persevering.

No Frank could be a slave. His very name proudly asserted his freedom. His sense of personal privilege was high, his sense of honour fine. He would follow the chief of his choice, but no other. He was no mercenary; he loved to loot the enemy, but he took no pay from his chief. The Frank obeyed no king; the tribe was its own master. In times of peace, they elected judges to regulate the simple administration of the tribe, to enforce the laws, and to regulate the use of the lands. In times of war, they elected a chief whom they obeyed in the field.

All questions affecting the tribe were discussed in public assemblies. The poorest Frank of them all had his say and his vote. To these meetings of the tribe everybody carried weapons. In the heat of debate, it frequently occurred that the orator strengthened his argument with his battle-axe, and persuaded his adversary with a club. Parliamentary mysteries not having been invented till a much

later day, the majority, in the Frankish legislatures, was often under the painful necessity of thrashing a turbulent minority into silence and acquiescence. When a speech was disapproved a hollow murmur rose among the tribesmen, and swelled into cries of dissent; when the orator pleased, spears clashed on shields, and the assembly rang with this barbaric applause.

Private ownership of land was unknown to the Franks. Once a year the fields were parcelled out among the tribesmen, and none of them knew one year where he might be assigned the next. The consequence was that no valuable improvement was made — it being to nobody's interest to build a good house or to enrich a field. Under such a system the laziest lout in the tribe might get, next year, the house and the improved field where the thriftiest had laboured this year; and the thrifty tribesman might be assigned, next year, to the shabby hut and neglected farm where the laziest lout had idled away his allotted time. Humanity is so constructed that no man will voluntarily serve another; we are all selfish enough to want what is ours, to reap where we sow. Take away the incentive to work, and work ceases; take away the motive to build, improve, develop, and adorn, and none of these take place. The Franks lived in open huts like the Indians or Africans; and produced just enough grain to supply coarse bread and inflammatory liquor. There was no progress in material development because there was no incentive. No man would toil to improve land or house where there was no guarantee that his labour would bless himself or his family.

The Franks were noted for the respect in which they held their women. Only the princes practised polygamy;

divorces were unknown, and adultery was punished as a rare and monstrous crime.

Their laws were few and simple; their social life primitive. They had no cities; no dwellings of stone or brick; no orchards or meadows; they wore skins and lived in log huts covered with grass or thatch. They had no money; no commerce; no manufactures. The women wove a coarse cloth in which they dressed — beyond this their development did not go.

Human life was held cheap. The Frank would wager his person on the turn of a game, and pay the forfeit without a murmur. The most trivial disputes were settled, man to man, by brute force. The appeal to arms was one of the liberties of the Frank, and he settled knotty points in tribal law with his axe.

Murder was not considered a capital crime. The relatives of the deceased were at liberty to kill the murderer if they could, or the offence could be atoned for by money payment. There was a market price for homicides, and the good citizen was expected to pay his fine cheerfully and promptly. The amount of payment varied with the dignity and importance of the person slain. To murder a prince cost twenty seven hundred dollars; a priest was rated at one thousand and eighty dollars, at which figure settlement was also made for killing a judge; deacons could be killed at seven hundred and twenty dollars each. To murder a Frank of the common sort cost three hundred and sixty dollars. Slaves could be slaughtered at the moderate price of one hundred dollars each.

In questions of doubt concerning the guilt or innocence of persons accused of crime, their modes of trial were various. One of their favourite methods was to tie the hands

and feet of the suspected criminal, and toss him into a huge tub of water. If he floated, it was clear to the minds of these simple people that the man was guilty, and must be dealt with according to the strict penalty of the law. If, however, he sank to the bottom and was drowned, his innocence was as clear as daylight, and they immediately buried him with every token of the highest respect.

Another mode of trial was to compel the accused to walk a certain distance between red-hot pieces of iron, laid close together. If his feet were burnt, his guilt was established; if they escaped, his innocence was admitted.

A more popular method, however, was that of trial by combat. It was supposed that the higher powers would fight on the side of justice, and that, therefore, differences of size and strength would carry no advantage in the struggle. It was a long time before the heads of the Franks were penetrated by the fact that the victory generally goes with the heaviest fist, driven by the skilfulest hitter.

Another method of trial was an improvement on all the foregoing, and out of it gradually grew trial by jury. A person accused of crime was allowed to summon a certain number of his neighbours to vouch for him. If they would swear that from their knowledge of his character they considered him incapable of the crime, he was allowed to go free. It frequently occurred that these neighbours were not willing to take that oath until they had heard all the evidence in the case. Thus by gradual evolution a man's neighbours became his jurors.

The religion of the Franks was a mixture of idolatry and superstition. They believed that the souls of the dead warriors ascended to a heaven whose chief glories were the banquet table and the battle-field.

The power of the leader, chosen by the tribe, depended largely upon the leader himself. There were no laws defining it. In war he was the first, because he was supposed to be the first in strength, in courage, and ability; but when victory was won he took his share of the spoils with the other soldiers.

Thus it is recorded that after the battle of Soissons, at which Clovis broke the power of the Romans in Gaul, all the booty was heaped together to be divided. The most valuable piece of this booty was a beautiful vase which the soldiers had taken from a Christian church. The bishop had sent a special messenger to Clovis, begging its return. The king wished to grant this request, and he therefore stood up before all of his warriors and asked that the vase be given him over and above his share. Everybody seemed willing to grant the request except one common soldier, who stepped out of the line, struck the vase with his battle-axe, and said: "You shall have what falls to you by lot, and nothing more." The soldier was so evidently in the right that Clovis dared not punish him for the insult. The affront, however, was remembered. In the following year when the warriors all assembled at the March parade, and Clovis went along the ranks inspecting their weapons, he came to this soldier. The king pretended that the soldier's sword and lance and battle-axe were all in bad shape, and not fit for service. He railed at the poor fellow in a loud voice and ended the scene by snatching the battle-axe from his hand and throwing it upon the ground. As the soldier stooped forward to pick it up, Clovis swung his own axe on high and brought it down with fatal force on the offender's head. "Thus," cried Clovis, "didst thou to the vase at Soissons."

That particular tribe of Franks which came into Gaul and gave their name to the country were called the Salian Franks. A.D. 431

Pharamond, of whom the warriors sang, was one of their kings, about whom we know so little that historians consider him a myth. Clodion, however, is historic; and, after some successes, he lost his life in battle against the Romans under Aëtius. Merovius was their elected chief, and under his command the Franks fought the Huns in the famous battle of Châlons, on the Catalaunian plains.

In 456 A.D. Merovius was succeeded by his son, Childeric, but the Franks grew disgusted with his luxurious habits, and deposed him. A Roman general, Ægidius, was elected in his place. At the end of eight years Childeric returned, followed by Queen Basina of Thuringia (another man's wife), and succeeded in reëstablishing himself as king of the Franks. 456

In an informal way he took Basina to wife, and begat Clovis — the founder of the kingdom of France.

A stalwart figure is that of Clovis, towering in rugged strength into companionship with those few men who create empires. At sixteen years of age, he became king of the small tribe of Salian Franks; at forty-five he died a consul of the Roman Empire, and king of all France. Between those two ages of fifteen and forty-five were crowded as many deeds of blood, of craft, and of crime as history lays to the charge of any of the great conquerors of earth.

When Clovis came upon the scene, conditions were most favourable for the man of action, the man who craved dominion.

Gaul was in a state of chaos; Rome was almost a mere

political expression. Ambitious generals seized upon provinces, and flouted the authority of the emperor.

In Gaul there were the Roman citizen, who despised the native, and the native, who hated the Roman. To the Gaul, no master could be much more injurious than the Roman; and if the Roman felt the need of defending the province, he had not the means of doing so. The dreaded legions had long since been called away to other fields, and Gaul was now left to take care of itself.

It had been so often overrun by marauding barbarians from the north, had been so often the theatre of civil war between contending aspirants for the Roman purple, had been so exhausted by remorseless tax-gatherers and greedy governors, that the spirit had gone out of the people, and there was no reserve force from which national defence could be organized.

The first considerable step made by Clovis in his march to power was the overthrow of a Roman governor of Soissons, named Syagrius, who had appointed himself king of
A.D. 486 his province, and was holding independent sway therein. Clovis made war upon him, beat him, and caused him to be put to death.

In accomplishing this important work, Clovis had needed help, and had begged it of another Frankish chief, named Ragnacaire. The aid was given, and the foundation of Clovis' power laid in the victory which followed.

The manner in which Clovis, many years afterwards, rewarded his ally for his assistance is interesting. Without any cause whatever, he made war upon Ragnacaire and defeated him. The old chief, forlorn and dishonoured, was preparing for flight, when he was treacherously seized by some of his own soldiers, and bound — he and his

brother Riquier. With hands tied behind them, Ragnacaire and Riquier were led into the presence of the victorious Clovis.

"Wherefore hast thou dishonoured our race by letting thyself wear bonds? 'Twere better to have died."

Thus spake Clovis to his ancient ally, striking him dead with one blow of the battle-axe. Turning to Riquier, Clovis remarked, "Hadst thou succoured thy brother, he had assuredly not been bound;" and with another blow of the axe laid him dead beside Ragnacaire.

This happened many years after Clovis had become a Christian.

* * * * * * * * *

The first Christian church in France was established, 150 years after Christ, by Pothinus, a disciple of Polycarp. From Lyons, where this church was built, the Gospel spread gradually over all the land.

In those days the Church was still simple in its ceremonial, austere in its life, intense in its zeal, and poor in its estate. No humiliating concessions had yet been made to kings. Pagan rites had not profaned the form, nor pagan superstitions the spirit of Christian worship. Spectacular effect was studied at a later day, when it was all important to impress the simple-minded barbarians.

The converts to Christ were separated from the pagan world by the highest of all distinctions, purity of life. Their faith was to them a passionate reality — something to die for; and, above all, to live by.

In its government, the Church was democratic. The humblest member of the congregation had his voice and vote in the election of the bishop. The power of appoint-

ment had not yet superseded the right of the Christians to elect their spiritual guides and governors.

To the indifference of the pagan, they opposed an aggressive conviction; to his gross materialism they opposed spirituality; to pagan beliefs in extinction at death they opposed a fiery and endlessly horrible hell; to the German's cloudy conception of the hall of Valhalla, with its eternity of feasting and fighting, they opposed a mystic city of infinite splendour beyond the skies, with streets of gold, with many mansions of the Father, — an Eden which was to have no cloud, no serpent, and no night. The barbarian's heaven was sensual, like himself; it reeked with blood and rang with the shouts of warriors who were happy in recollections of gratified revenge and in drinking themselves drunk out of cups made from the skulls of foes slain in battle.

The Christian's heaven was, like himself, spiritual; it knew no earthly passion, no envy, hatred, nor malice; it was full of peace, rest, love, and melody, — melody breathing from golden harps, in which all the deathless yearning of noble souls was to find expression; and the nameless sorrow, the unutterable sadness, which lingers in all earthly music whatsoever was to live no more.

Thus appealing to the inborn yearning of men for eternal happiness, the religion of Christ fell upon the indifferent and hopeless pagan world like the peal of a trumpet.

Yet, again, it proclaimed the brotherhood of man. It is almost impossible for us to realize the inspiration which lay in this doctrine. A few wealthy nobles lorded it over the earth, holding themselves above the masses, as a Brahman towers over a Sudra. Oppressing the bulk of the free Romans, socially, politically, and financially, they

increased their own importance by adding constantly to the long roll of their slaves.

Therefore, when the Christians daringly preached that all men were equal in the eyes of God, and the soul of the slave as precious to Him who created it as that of the master who owned him, the vast majority of the Roman population heard what was to them the trumpet of social and spiritual resurrection, although the Church made no assault upon the institution of slavery, nor upon any other political grievance.

It is no wonder, then, that we find the Gospel of Christ spreading like a running fire among the slaves and the poor.

Rome tolerated all religions, used them all, despised them all. Every god had his temple and his devotees. Unless religion came into collision with the State, it was not molested. Therefore, the Christian religion went its way, unchallenged by Rome, until it defied public authority and military discipline.

The first persecution of the Christians in Gaul arose out of this circumstance: A private soldier in the Roman army, by gallantry in action, had won the notice of his superior officers, and a crown, or coronet of honour, had been awarded him. He refused to wear it upon the ground that it was idolatrous, and that he, being a Christian, could not indulge in idolatry. This act of insubordination created an immense stir, and the persecutions of the Christians at once followed. It does not enter into the purpose of this work to detail the horrors which ensued. Even to this day it chills the blood to read of the atrocities which were practised upon the Christians by the mad rage of pagan mobs. Men were tortured in every conceivable

way, and tender women and children were subjected to every outrage that brutal hatred could suggest. The courage of conviction which sustained these people was sublime in its constancy.

Though the charred bones of the martyr might be seen in every village, the faith for which he had died was beyond the reach of the fire, and it sank deeper into the hearts and minds of men.

Periods of toleration, following these incidental persecutions, gave the missionary time to found schools and churches, and to gather influence with the ruling classes.

In course of time, as the Roman government began to go to pieces, the local administration fell into the hands of the Christian clergy. The bishops virtually governed the towns, and formed among themselves a powerful and organized hierarchy. These bishops were all called popes (fathers) at first, and in power each was, theoretically, the equal of the others.

But, among the Christians themselves, mighty differences arose. The Arian Christians, refusing to admit the existence of three Gods, believed in God, the Father, as the one eternal, indivisible God. They held that Christ was first of all created beings, but not a coequal God with his Father.

The Catholic Christians, on the contrary, asserted the doctrine of the Trinity: that there were three persons in the Godhead, but only one God.

Over this question, Christians wrangled for several hundred years. Numerous attempts were made to adjust the dispute by conference and compromise, but they all came to naught. The Arians planted themselves upon the rule in arithmetic, that three times one are three, and

they refused to see it any other way. The Catholics, however, wisely avoiding the complications which would ensue if Christians denied that Christ was a God, or *admitted* that there was more than one God, advanced the doctrine which preserved Christ's divinity, and yet escaped the paganistic pitfall of a plurality of Gods. They reconciled the apparently conflicting propositions by saying that the three persons, each of them a God, formed but one Triune God.

The issue between these two sects of Christians was irreconcilable, and the feud shook the entire Roman world. It was a matter of self-preservation for the Catholics to extinguish Arianism. The life of the orthodox church was at stake; and having failed to put down Arianism by reason, they determined to do it by arms. Clovis was the instrument which they chose for the work.

Among the conquering Franks, in Gaul, there was only one Catholic princess. This was Clotilda, the daughter of the chief, or king, of Burgundy. Between this princess and Clovis the Catholic bishops arranged a marriage, exacting an agreement that the children born of it should be baptized into the Christian faith. By this marriage, Clovis rallied to himself the vast strength of the Catholic bishops.

At their instance, he turned his arms upon the Arian chiefs, overthrew them in battle, led off their people into captivity, and took possession of their dominions, giving a liberal share to the orthodox church. This was the beginning of religious wars among the Christians.

Clovis himself remained a pagan some years after his marriage; but, in one of his battles, he fell into a panic, and, despairing of help from his own gods, he called aloud

for aid on the God of his wife. The tide of battle turned, victory came to him, and he was baptized a Christian, together with his warriors. Clovis became, therefore, the only orthodox, or Catholic, king in Gaul.

A.D. 496

By a dramatic career of force and fraud, daring and craft, perfidy and crime, Clovis crushed all rivals in France, and welded its widely different elements into a great kingdom. His fame spread to the East, and the Emperor Anastasius bestowed upon him the purple and diadem of a Roman patrician and consul — titles which were honorary only, but which carried with them a certain moral and political weight.

Upon the clergy he showered gifts, and between Church and State a close union was formed. Eldest son of the Church is a title which was first bestowed upon Clovis. He had earned it, not by the purity of his life, but by the amplitude of his donations.

The union formed between a ruthless conqueror, like Clovis, and the Church of Christ, necessarily lowered the standard of Christian morals. Out of it grew monstrous evils, hurtful to the Church as well as to the State.

In the eagerness of the clergy to secure offices and wealth, they catered too much to paganism and barbarian tastes. It was at this time that the Church began to baptize whole tribes and armies at one time; to condone royal crimes; and to introduce processions, festivals, gorgeous raiment, and artistic decorations, in order to fascinate or conciliate the pagan mind.

When Clovis was received into the Church, the pomp and splendour of the ceremonial was so great that he asked in good faith of the bishop officiating, "Father, is not this itself that heaven which you have promised me?"

This really great man had all the superstition of a savage. He believed in miracles, and made bargains with saints before fighting battles. He implicitly believed the bishop of Tournay when that holy man, after earnestly wrestling a decent season in prayer, handed the crime-stained king a writing in which the divine hand had written a full pardon — according to the bishop.

Huge was the gift with which the untutored Clovis, "certain of his sins and doubtful of his salvation," rewarded the good bishop for this little piece of parchment.

Another incident as happily illustrates the kind of man the clergy were manipulating: —

St. Martin of Tours was a favourite with Clovis. Before engaging in battle with the Goths he vowed to give the saint, in the event of victory, as a sacrifice, the horse which he himself rode, and which he loved above all other horses.

The battle was fought and won. By the king's own agreement the horse was forfeited to St. Martin. But it grieved the king sorely to give him up. In his distress a bright idea came to his relief. Would not St. Martin sell the horse? Straightway he sends to the bishop who is supposed to be in touch with the saint, and offers 100 gold pieces to redeem the horse. St. Martin, from the land of spirits, answers, through the bishop, that he is willing to sell, but not at that price. The saint makes a counter proposition, and his figure is so high that the king's temper fails him.

"An excellent man in time of need is this St. Martin," says Clovis, peevishly, "but difficult to do business with." The saint being inexorable, the king had to pay the price demanded.

The churchmen absorbed and monopolized nearly all the learning of that age. Besides, their profession made them experts in dealing with the superstitions of the time. The eternal questions of death and the hereafter exercised their spell over the thoughts of men in those rude days to a greater extent even than they do now. Hence, when the churchmen came in contact with the warrior, it was seldom indeed that the power of learning, the power of intellect, and the power to use spiritual weapons did not dominate the soldier who wielded the spear.

Let it be remembered that with all the faults of many of her princes, the Church did a magnificent work in those dark and bloody days. It was to the influence which she had established over the minds of barbarians that the weak owed protection. It was to her that the homeless outcast appealed for shelter and food. It was to her that the widow or the orphan lifted the hand of supplication. It was to her sanctuary that the hunted fugitive fled for refuge. Dimly as the lamp of learning burned, its light but for her would have been utterly extinguished. She taught the doctrine of fraternity in an age when the haughty noble of Rome or of Gaul, looking down in cruel contempt upon the serf whose labour supported him, was slow to admit that one God made them both. She taught the doctrine of duty and of self-sacrifice at a period when men were groping in the dark, without a moral standard. And she taught peace and mercy at a time when the shedding of blood was scarcely considered a crime.

The great fact in French history is the terrible revolution of 1789. The student who desires to understand its causes, and its violence, will never do so unless he considers the changes wrought by Clovis. It must be borne

in mind that the Gauls were the great body of the people of France; that the Franks under Clovis had conquered them and taken their lands; that these Franks thus became a landed nobility intensely hated by the great body of the people because they were foreigners, and because they were conquerors. In this way commenced that wide and cruel difference between the upper and lower classes in France which made the tyranny of the upper classes more intolerable, and the hatred of the lower classes more intense than it has ever been in any other modern European country.

These German conquerors were a tall, robust, blue-eyed, fair-haired race of people, and even at the breaking out of the revolution the distinguishing features of blue eyes and blond hair were very common among the nobles whom the people so bitterly hated. Thus, after the lapse of twelve hundred years the conquerors had largely maintained the physical type of their distant ancestry, while side by side with it ran the dark current of intense hatred, handed down among the despised peasants from sire to son, and destined at last to break out into a convulsion of wrath which shook the world.

On the 27th of November, 511, Clovis died at Paris, and was buried in the Church of St. Geneviève, built by his wife Clotilda.

The preëminence, social and political, of the Catholic Church owes its origin to its alliance with Clovis. To his bounty it owes the beginnings of its vast wealth. To his partiality was due many of its most cherished privileges and prerogatives.

The accepted belief that Constantine was the Father of the Church is not correct. He merely made Christianity

legal; he did not make it the state religion, as Clovis did. Constantine himself held the highest office known to the pagan priesthood, that of Pontifex Maximus. He neither prohibited nor limited paganism. He allowed temples to be erected to himself, and permitted his subjects to worship him as a god.

The truth seems to be that Constantine, consummate politician that he was, recognized the strength of the Christian element in the Roman world, and used it skilfully. He was no more of a Christian than Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte.

With Clovis it was different. He himself remained a savage to the last, and neither he nor his wife Clotilda ever lost an opportunity to take pitiless revenge upon defeated enemies, but they made the Christian faith the state religion, and formed that close alliance between Church and State which altered the course of history.

Previous to the time of Clovis, the Christians had relied upon moral suasion, alone, for the propagation of the faith. They had incited no wars. It was even held by a large body of the Church that Christians could not conscientiously take part in warfare. The first martyr who fell a victim to Rome was a Christian soldier who said that his religion did not allow him to fight or kill. This pioneer Quaker was put to death, under military law, and was made into a saint by the early Church.

But with the advent of Clovis all was changed. The bishops called on the warriors to aid the preacher, the sword to aid the cross. In a short time the Church of Christ breathed as fierce a spirit as ever lit the fires of Mohammedan fanaticism. Bishops went with the army, fought with the army, worked miracles to encourage the army,

and, the victory won, thronged the tent of the conqueror claiming their share of the spoil. The Church thus lowered itself to the plane of mere brutal conquest, but it gained enormously in wealth and power.

In this way, the comparatively few Frankish warriors overran and subdued the entire kingdom of Gaul, just as the comparatively few Normans subdued England, and the comparatively few English, long afterwards, subdued India. It was conquest supported by religious influence, political management, and physical force.

The Arians were put down because they believed in one God; the bishops next turned upon the Bretons, who denied the necessity of infant baptism.

This heresy was dangerous. It interfered with that complete spiritual ownership, from cradle to grave, which the priests were bent upon establishing. It was their set purpose to take everything to the Church, leaving nothing to nature or to man.

Once more the greed of Clovis and his savages was inflamed by prospects of booty, and war, cruel and persistent, was made upon these wicked Bretons, whose crime consisted in believing that innocent babes would go to heaven, even if they should die unsprinkled by a priest.

Towns were given to the flames; fields ravaged and laid waste; mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, sent headlong to a red burial in the horrors of war; and from this time dates the degeneracy of the Christian Church.

Her bishops became warriors, politicians, schemers, partners in crime, and the priestly robe was dragged through the slime of selfish ambition and corrupt intrigue. Blessings were pronounced upon deeds which should have been cursed. Court was paid to criminals who should

have been exposed. Bishops fawn upon terrible Fredegonda, popes cringe to Brunehilda, and from both the Church receives largess.

Thus, always advancing, the bishops reached supreme power by material means, and when the primacy of the bishop of Rome was at length admitted, the vast power of the Church was wielded with the irresistible strength of centralization. When that day came, Rome was once more imperial. She ruled the world. The popes were Cæsars. They made and unmade kings. Crowns were but gifts of theirs, and nations their vassals.

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CHAPTER IV

THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS

(561-747)

CLOTAIRE, CHARIBERT, CHILPERIC, FREDEGONDA, AND BRUNEHILDA

WITH the death of Clovis, the Dark Ages begin. Brute force reigns, and society sinks back into turbulent lawlessness. Here and there a sanctuary of the Church, held, fortress-like, by some intrepid bishop, is a rock against which the waves of violence break in vain: superstition draws a charmed circle about it, and marauders fear to tempt its mysterious terrors. But these sanctuaries are the exceptions; they serve, indeed, as lighthouses, to show the darkness and danger of the times. Even in these holy places, the very fugitives who flee to them for shelter and safety will brawl and fight, will horrify the patient priests with lewd revelry and impious license.

Beyond the pale of these sacred places all is darkness. Public war and private feud, open murder and stealthy assassination, robbery on the highway and rapine in the villages, churches despoiled and cities sacked, lust without shame and treachery without limit, physical force triumphant and brutal passions madly supreme — these are the characteristic features of this terrible period of the successors of Clovis.

Possessing little of the ability of their great ancestor, each of his descendents equalled him in perfidy, lust,

rapacity, and cruelty. They swore solemn oaths and broke them; paid debts of gratitude by the slaughter of the creditor; took wives by the half-dozen and concubines by the score; robbed the dead and plundered the living; strangled wives, murdered children, poisoned relatives, and wreaked upon foes every torture which the ferocity of savage nature could suggest.

Sometimes they plundered the kingdom of a neighbour; sometimes they plundered their own. Sometimes they robbed the nobles; sometimes the Church. Never for a moment did they forget to rob the common people.

The manners and the morals of the times can best be illustrated by some of the incidents cited by historians.

Clovis left four sons, who divided his kingdom between them. One of them, Clodomir, in making war upon the Burgundians fell into an ambush and was killed. He left a young widow and three sons by a previous marriage. These boys had a right to succeed their father, and divide his part of the kingdom between themselves.

Having lost both father and mother, these children were living at Paris with their grandmother, Clotilda, the widow of the great Clovis.

Two of her sons decided to seize upon the inheritance of their nephews, and divide it between themselves. They sent a message to their aged mother to this effect. "Send the children to us, that we may place them upon the throne." Greatly was the lady rejoiced, never dreaming that her sons could murder her grandsons. The children were sent. Then the cruel sons despatched a messenger to their mother bearing a pair of shears and a naked sword.

She was to choose whether the shears, or the sword,

should be used on the children. The family of Clovis was known as the Merovingians, and they wore long hair as a badge of royalty. To shear their hair meant that they could not be kings — meant dethronement.

The grandmother, frenzied by surprise and grief, cried out, "If they be not set upon the throne, I would rather they were dead than shorn." Without waiting for further words, the messenger hurried back to those who sent him.

One of the uncles, Clotaire, caught hold of one of the little boys and stabbed him to death with a hunting knife. The surviving child caught his other uncle, Childebert, by the hands and begged so piteously for his life that the harsh man was moved to tears and sought to shield him from the knife. "Thrust him away," cried Clotaire, "or thou diest in his stead — thou who didst instigate this work!"

Childebert pushed the poor boy away, and Clotaire slew him.

One of these children was ten years old, the other seven.

The helpless grandmother had the victims buried in the Church of St. Geneviève at Paris with great parade, much chanting, and mourning, but there was no tribunal which could punish the murderers. They were kings, and above the ordinary law which gave to the family of the victim one of two methods of inflicting punishment, — a fine, or private war, and the royal assassins calmly divided the inheritance between themselves.

These boys had another brother who was saved by some brave friend, but he was so frightened at what had happened to his brothers that he cut off his hair with his own hands, took refuge in a convent, and became a priest. It is a clear proof of the security of the refuge offered by the

Church in those wild times that his savage uncles never molested him.

Having killed two of his brother Clodomir's sons, Clotaire married his brother Clodomir's young widow.

One of Clotaire's wives was named Ingonda. He loved her better than any of his collection. One day she said to him, "I pray you find a man both capable and rich to marry my sister Aregonda." At these words Clotaire said nothing, but the thought occurred to him that he might as well take a look at the girl himself. So out he went into the country where she dwelt, and paid her a visit. Pleased with her appearance, he immediately married her. After spending some days with her, he returned to Ingonda, and said, "I laboured to procure the favour thou didst sweetly ask, and on looking round for a man both capable and rich for thy sister, I could find none better than myself; know, therefore, that I have taken her to wife."

Ingonda meekly replied, "Let my lord do as seemeth good to him; only, let me continue to find favour in his sight."

One of his brothers, named Theodoric, took it into his head to kill Clotaire. Unfortunately, the plot miscarried. Theodoric invited Clotaire to visit him, and posted some assassins behind a curtain in the room. The curtain was just a little too short and their feet were seen. Somebody sent word to Clotaire in time, and he brought a band of armed men with him when he entered the room. This spoilt the trap entirely; and Theodoric, instead of killing his brother, had a pleasant conversation with him, and made him a present of a silver dish of great value. As soon as Clotaire departed, Theodoric was sorry about

the silver vessel, and sent his son to ask his brother to return it. Strange to say, he did so.

As already stated, Childebert and Clotaire had conspired against their little nephews, had murdered them, and had taken their portion of the kingdom.

Now, in later years, Childebert conspired with Clotaire's son to put Clotaire out of the way. The plan failed. Childebert died, and Clotaire seized his dominions. Clotaire's son fled away, and sought shelter in Brittany. His father followed him, defeated the Bretons who sought to defend him, shut him up with his wife and children in a wooden hut, set fire to it, and burnt the whole family.

Returning to his favourite farm and residence, Braine, with a conscience calm and serene, this magnificent savage decided to relax himself in the pleasures of the chase. The grand autumnal hunts were almost national institutions with the Franks. The forests were vast in extent, wild and dangerous, full of "big game," chief of which was the antlered stag and the ferocious wild boar. The chase in those days meant a wild ride for hundreds of miles, kept up day after day. To take the quarry required skill and daring, nerve and perseverance. The stag had a chance as well as the hunter. The wild boar sometimes brought down the man, instead of the man the boar.

Hunting was really royal sport; there was life, there was motion, excitement, suspense, danger, — the mellow bay of dogs, the blare of horns, the clatter of horses at speed, the cry of eager hunters, all waking the echoes of dim, primitive forests.

So Clotaire, having hunted his son to death and given a fiery tomb to his wife and children as well, sent out

A.D. 561 word that he would hunt in the vast forest of Cuise. He hunted accordingly, and overdid it, bringing on a fever, of which he died.

His four sons, Charibert, Gonthram, Chilperic, and Sigibert, followed the funeral procession, singing psalms and bearing waxen tapers. As soon as the burial was over, Chilperic set out in haste to Braine, where his father's treasures were, and stole them straightway. He used part of the money to bribe the chiefs, and, gathering up an army, he marched upon Paris, intent upon seizing all of his father's dominions. The other brothers then combined, assembled forces of their own, and also advanced towards Paris. Chilperic, seeing himself outnumbered, decided to compromise. The kingdom was divided, and the brothers swore a mighty oath, upon the relics of the saints, to abide by the division.

Charibert had several wives, one of whom was the daughter of a serf. He liked her so well that he married her sister also. This scandalous conduct caused Germain, bishop of Paris, to excommunicate the king. Charibert paid no attention whatever to the sentence, and kept both his wives. The time was not yet come when the curse of Rome could shatter a throne and spread a pall over a kingdom.

After Charibert's death, which occurred suddenly near Bordeaux, one of his queens, Theodehilda, the daughter of a shepherd, sent word to Gonthram, her dead husband's brother, that she would bring him all the treasure of the late king, her husband, provided that he, Gonthram, would agree to marry her.

"Certainly," said Gonthram. "Come and bring the treasure."

The ingenious widow loaded a number of ox-carts with valuables, such as money, vases, gold and silver vessels, etc., got into one of these carts herself, and set out cheerfully in search of another husband.

Gonthram, who was already abundantly supplied with wives and concubines, received Theodehilda with coolness, but contemplated the wagons with mingled joy and affection. He carefully laid the treasures away in his own keeping, and then he detailed a squad of soldiers to conduct the widow to the nunnery of Arles.

The territories of Charibert were then parcelled between the three surviving brothers. Paris was divided equally among the three and was to be a neutral town. Neither was to enter it, without the consent of the others.

Again they swore a mighty oath upon the relics of saints to abide by the division.

Sigibert was the youngest of the sons of Clotaire, and the best. Disgusted with the brutality of his brothers' lives, he determined to content himself with one wife, but she must be of royal degree.

The king of the Goths, of Spain, had two daughters, the younger of whom, Brunehilda, was known far and wide for her beauty. Sigibert sent deputies, bearing rich presents, into Spain and asked of the Gothic king the hand of his fair daughter in marriage. Consent was given, and Brunehilda journeyed into France to wed her royal lover at Metz. A.D. 566

The marriage was celebrated with elaborate pomp. All the lords of the kingdom of Sigibert were bidden to the ceremony. They came flocking in with their escorts until the town was alive with governors of provinces, counts of cities, chiefs of tribes beyond the Rhine, and dukes of friendly bands of neighbouring Germans.

In this assemblage of guests were to be seen representatives of every race in Gaul. There were Gallic nobles, polished and courtly; Frankish nobles, rough and haughty; Germanic chiefs from over the Rhine, clad in furs, and savage in look and manner.

The nuptial banquet was one of barbaric splendour. Displayed upon the board were the spoils of many a bloody raid; golden vases stripped from churches, silver vessels and golden plates seized in the sack of cities, drinking cups studded with gems, once the ornament of some altar or palace, threw an appearance of rude magnificence over the scene. For drink there was wine, and spirits, and beer; for food there were hogs, cows, calves, and deer roasted whole, — to say nothing of that glory of mediæval cookery, the huge pie which had for crust an immense ox, and the ingredients of which were turkeys, chickens, ducks, doves, pigs, and any other little delicacy of which the cook could think at the time.

Great was the enjoyment of the Franks at these grand banquets. They ate, they drank, they talked, they laughed, they sang, they quarrelled, they fought, — they did everything which barbarians could possibly do to give themselves a good time.

At the wedding feast of beautiful Brunehilda, 1300 years ago, there was jollity, far into the night, and the bride's heart was glad and proud, for she had found both a spouse and a lover in Sigibert.

The marriage ceremony itself was as simple as could be; the husband put a ring on the finger of his wife, and gave her a piece of money called the *denarius;* that was all. This was the custom of the Franks. It was also the invariable custom among Germanic tribes that the husband

should make the wife a present on the morning after the marriage. This present was known as the *morning gift*, and was supposed to be a mark of gratitude on the part of the husband.

Now it came to pass that when Chilperic, the elder brother, heard of Sigibert's marriage, he was filled with rage and jealousy. True, he himself had many wives, but none of them was the daughter of a king. Clearly, unless he exerted himself, he would be obscured by the greater glory of his younger brother. Chilperic was thoroughly a man of his time, brutal, brave, cunning, superstitious, and inconstant. Up to this time his career had presented no remarkable features, except that he had already formed his fatal connection with Fredegonda.

This woman was a servant in the palace, and her extreme beauty of face and figure so moved Chilperic that he made her his concubine. The girl was cunning and ambitious, the queen, Androweda, was simple and unsuspecting, and Fredegonda soon pushed her aside.

It happened thus: Chilperic had marched across the Rhine to fight Saxons, leaving Androweda far gone in pregnancy. While he was still away, the child came. It was a daughter, and the queen asked Fredegonda whether it should be baptized while the father was absent. Fredegonda advised baptism. When the christening day arrived, the godmother failed to attend, — Fredegonda having arranged it so. The queen, in great distress, did not know what to do. "Why not be godmother yourself?" suggested Fredegonda.

The queen fell into the trap, and the bishop proceeded with the ceremony, according to a prior agreement with the cunning Fredegonda.

The Saxons having been disposed of, Chilperic returned home, in the manner of a conquering hero, and was met by outbursts of national applause. The people crowded round and honoured him while the prettiest girls strewed flowers in his path, and sang songs in his praise.

Listen to Fredegonda, as she meets the king: —

"Blessed be God that the king, our lord, has crushed his enemies, and that a daughter is born to him. But with whom will my lord sleep this night? for the queen, my mistress, has become godmother to her daughter and is now my lord's gossip."

The unsuspecting wife stood in the door of the palace, her child in her arms, awaiting the coming of her lord, the king. With all the love of a true wife, with all the pride of a true mother, she held out the babe in her arms, and presented it to her husband with infinite joy and tenderness.

"Woman," said Chilperic, "in thy simplicity thou hast been guilty of a crime; in future thou canst not be my wife."

By the law of the Church godmothers and godfathers became spiritually related both to the parents and the children, and marriage between them was forbidden. The queen did not know this, hence her fall.

Chilperic divorced her, and married the cunning servant. For fifteen years the deserted wife lived in a nunnery, and was then murdered by order of Fredegonda.

As has been said, Chilperic was aroused by the splendid marriage of his brother, Sigibert, and he set his heart upon getting just such a high-born wife for himself.

Sending an embassy to the king of the Goths, Chilperic demanded in marriage the hand of Galeswintha, the sister

of Brunehilda. The request was denied. Chilperic's reputation had reached the Gothic court and had inspired horror there. The princess and her mother protested against the match, and piteously besought the Gothic king not to consent.

Finally, Chilperic swore a mighty oath on the sacred relics, that if Galeswintha would become his wife he would put away all others, and have neither wife nor concubine but her.

Political reasons carried the day, and Galeswintha was sacrificed. It is very touching even now, this record of a maiden's vain tears and entreaties, of a mother's pleadings and prayers, of a father's hardness of heart. The girl was delivered over to the Franks to be carried out of Spain into France. Day after day, the frantic mother followed the escort, putting off to the last possible moment the final leave-taking. "Let me follow but this day and I will return," says the Gothic queen. Then, on the next day it is, "Only one more day, and I will go." And then on the next it is, "One more, only one, grant it me!"

But all things end, and the day came when the queen-mother was told that she could follow no further. Goths they were, this mother and daughter, but how like *us* they loved and grieved and suffered! One passionate straining to the heart, one lingering pressure of arms, one great sob without words, and the bereaved queen stands aside and lets the escort go, gazing after it, in mute, unutterable pain, till a turn in the road hides it from view.

Now Chilperic, in expectation of his bride's coming, had made his house ready; and had swept out all his wives and concubines with one exception. With demure cunning Fredegonda had appeared to submit meekly to her

degradation, and had asked to resume her former work as servant in the palace. Chilperic consented.

Galeswintha's wedding was royally celebrated. There was a sumptuous feast to which all the nobles were invited. Ranging themselves round the young queen, the warriors, according to old pagan custom, drew their swords, brandished them on high, and swore fidelity to her as to a king.

Chilperic, of course, swore another oath, on the sacred relics, binding himself in the most stringent terms to be faithful to Galeswintha.

Next morning the delighted savage gave her the morning gift, in the usual manner. That is, he took his wife's right hand in his own, and with his left he threw over her head a straw, pronouncing at the same time the names of five towns which were to be her property, viz. Cahors, Béarn, Bigorre, Limoges, and Bordeaux.

A.D. 568 For several months Chilperic enjoyed the novelty of one wife and the companionship of a decent woman. Then he grew tired. The monotony became a burden. Fredegonda was on the alert, expecting this very thing. Quietly and temptingly she managed to throw herself in the king's way, and the king forgot his oath of fidelity to his wife.

Galeswintha wept, complained, and begged leave to go home. The king professed penitence, prayed pardon, and promised reform. The simple queen was pacified, and one night Chilperic had her smothered as she lay sleeping in her bridal bed.

Fredegonda thus came back into place and power, never to be thrown off again.

Brunehilda, the sister of the murdered woman, swore vengeance on her slayers, Chilperic and Fredegonda.

Sigibert, spurred on by Brunehilda, called in aid from Gonthram, and declared war upon the murderers.

Gonthram soon lost interest in the case and proposed mediation. A national council was held, the guilt of Chilperic conceded, and he was condemned to surrender to Brunehilda the morning gift of her sister, namely, the five towns already named.

To this sentence all promised obedience, and Chilperic swore another solemn oath, which he meant to break at his earliest convenience.

In the year 573, he sent an army under his son Clovis, son of Androweda, to retake the five towns which he had given his murdered wife. They were undefended and were easily taken; but Gonthram sent an army to recapture them, and they were as easily retaken again.

Chilperic, in great wrath, raised a larger army to renew the war. Gonthram dropped back into the position of a neutral, and Sigibert took up his wife's cause. Chilperic's troops, commanded by Theodebert, his son, defeated the opposing army, and laid waste the country around Tours and Poitiers with wanton barbarity. Churches were plundered, priests slain at the altar, nuns violated, convents burnt, and the whole region reduced to a smoking ruin.

Sigibert aroused himself, gathered a large army, set out for the scene of action, and Chilperic's forces retreated before him. Without a single battle, the war was ended, and Chilperic begged off from punishment by piteous entreaties and by swearing another solemn oath on the relics of the saints. A.D. 574

In ever so short a time he grew bold again. Sigibert's army had marched home and disbanded. Chilperic, bent

upon the recovery of the morning gift of the murdered queen, again put an army into the field.

Brunehilda aroused Sigibert once more, and he summoned to his standards, by unlimited promises of booty, the half-savage tribes beyond the Rhine.

Ever ready for marauding adventures, these terrible warriors came over in great numbers.

A.D. 575 Sigibert advanced upon the oft-perjured Chilperic, and that tough barbarian was as little inclined to fight as before. He steadily and earnestly fell back. Sigibert's march brought him to Paris, and he occupied it, his oath to the contrary notwithstanding. From this base, he operated so successfully that the enemy was beaten on all sides, and Chilperic was shut up in Tournay.

Believing that his cause was hopeless, the Frankish chiefs of Chilperic invited Sigibert to come among them, offering to elect him their king. Having invested Tournay, and cut off all retreat from Chilperic, Sigibert advanced into the country of the Neustrian Franks, as they had asked him to do.

Brunehilda, naturally anxious to have her share in the enjoyment of all this glory, set out from Metz, her capital, for Paris, carrying immense treasures in silver and gold with her. Still young and beautiful, she made a splendid appearance as she entered Paris; and her welcome was emphasized by the huzzas of the rabble, the flatteries of the clergy, and the homage of the aristocracy.

Only one man of prominence held back. This was Germain, bishop of Paris. Thinking only of his distracted country and his offended God, Germain bravely remonstrated with Brunehilda and Sigibert, and used his utmost efforts to stop the war.

But Sigibert would not listen, nor would Brunehilda.

"Whoso diggeth a pit for his brother, shall fall into it himself," said Germain, warningly; but the warning fell unheeded.

On a plain near Vitry, in Neustrian Gaul, the Frankish chiefs assemble to elect a king in place of Chilperic. Armed as for battle, the fierce warriors form a circle, with Sigibert in the centre. Four soldiers advance, bringing a buckler. Sigibert sits down upon it, and the warriors raise it to the height of their shoulders. Three times they bear Sigibert, in this manner, round the circle, amid the noisy acclamations of all present. Swords and spears are clashed against the iron bands of the shields; and, with this martial clamour, Sigibert is proclaimed king of the Neustrian Franks.

Then follow feasts, mock fights, and various rejoicings; in the midst of which suddenly enter two emissaries of Fredegonda, who stab King Sigibert — and he dies.

At once, the whole situation reverses itself.

Bereft of their king, Sigibert's troops, after slaying his murderers, disband in confusion. Chilperic, so lately a mere caged rat, has by the desperate expedient of his terrible wife, become once more a king. His subjects return to their allegiance. Some of Sigibert's chiefs swear fealty to Chilperic, and that monarch, taking the offensive, plans the seizure of his brother's family and kingdom.

Brunehilda is at Paris, plunged, at one tremendous blow, from a pinnacle into the depths. Power is gone; friends fall off; she is in a far country from her own; she is watched; she cannot flee; she is about to become a prisoner to the murderer of her sister, and her helpless chil-

dren to fall into the hands of remorseless rivals who covet their heritage.

A.D. 575 The situation is desperate, but Brunehilda has wit and courage. Moreover, she has a few faithful friends. Her chief concern is her oldest boy, Chilperic. If she can but get him back into his own country, much may be saved. The nobles will rally round him, he will be chosen to fill his father's place, and thus his uncle will not seize the kingdom. With woman's art, the mother conceals the child in a market basket, the basket is let down from the window, and by the faithful Gundobald is carried safely beyond the walls of Paris to a devoted friend outside, and then — away! away! as fast as steed can fly. By this device it happened that when Chilperic came and looked into the cage, the bird which he most wanted had flown. The little king was already at Metz, and the Franks had put the circle of their bright swords about him. *That* heritage Chilperic will not get.

But he seizes Brunehilda and all her treasures. He does not put her to death nor treat her harshly. She is so beautiful, so winning, so much to be pitied, that the brutal king, who had smothered one of the sisters, spares the other.

And now a domestic tragedy slowly gathers. This beautiful queen, so unfortunate and so attractive, has smitten the heart of Chilperic's son. Merovius loves her; and this passion will lead him, miserably, to a bloody death.

Renewing, once more, his purpose of taking back the morning gift of Galeswintha, King Chilperic sent another army, under Merovius, to seize the five towns. Instead of doing this, the mad young man left his army and

went to Rouen, where Brunehilda was being held under guard.

Merovius persuaded her to marry him. This unnatural union of a nephew with his uncle's widow was sanctioned by Pretaxtus, bishop of Rouen, and Fredegonda afterwards had him deposed and slain for it.

The outraged Chilperic advanced upon Rouen, and caught the cooing lovers unawares. They barely had time to take refuge in a sanctuary to avoid falling into the hands of the furious king.

Brutal as Chilperic was, he dared not violate their asylum. His only resource was to entice the lovers out. This he did, swearing solemnly to all sorts of assurances. As soon as they were at his mercy, he violated his oath, as usual, bore Merovius off, a prisoner, and left Brunehilda behind at Rouen, more strictly guarded than ever.

Fredegonda never gave Chilperic any rest until he had slain, one after another, all the children of Androweda. They were in her way, and in the way of her own children. She now set to work to compass the death of Merovius. She made Chilperic believe that his son was conspiring against his life and crown. Without any proof, the king degraded him.

First, Merovius was deprived of his arms and his military baldric; then his long, flaxen hair, the pride of the Merovingian race and the badge of royalty, was shorn.

Clad in the Roman dress, which was that of the clergy, Merovius was put on horseback, and sent, under escort, toward the monastery of St. Calais, where he was to become a monk.

Filled with rage and shame, the degraded prince wended his way toward the convent; but a young Frankish war- A.D. 576

rior, Gailen, who was one of the leudes, or military companions, of Merovius, lay in ambush to surprise the escort and set the prisoner free. Throwing off his monkish garb, Merovius once more clad himself in the military costume of the Franks, and hastened to take shelter in the sanctuary of St. Martin of Tours.

King Chilperic's anger may be imagined. "Drive the apostate from your sanctuary; otherwise I will lay waste all the surrounding country;" this was the message sent by the irate king to the bishop, Gregory of Tours, who replied that even the Goths had respected the right of sanctuary, and he believed it would not be violated now.

Pushed forward by Fredegonda, Chilperic raised an army, and threatened the city of Tours. Merovius, not willing to bring such a calamity upon those who had sheltered him, wished to depart, but was persuaded to stay by another fugitive from Chilperic's vengeance, Gonthram Boson. This man had caused the brother of Merovius to be slain after that prince had been defeated in battle and taken prisoner.

Chilperic's physician, Marileif, was then at Tours, on his way from Soissons to Poitiers, his native city. He had with him much baggage and few followers; much wealth and few defenders. This physician was a good old man, and most unwarlike; he had never killed anybody, except in a strictly professional manner.

A.D. 577 Now, Merovius was sorely in need of money, and so were his companions. With one accord they fell upon the rich doctor, dispersed his escort, beat his body, and plundered his baggage. He barely escaped with his life, and, with hardly a garment to cover his nakedness, took shelter in the cathedral.

Here we have a faithful picture of the times. Chilperic chasing Merovius, and Merovius chasing the doctor; while both fugitives flee for refuge to the Church.

Chilperic's army being ready to march upon Tours, he suddenly became timid and uncertain. He did not know exactly what St. Martin might do to him, if he, the king, violated the sanctuary of the saint. Naturally, the suggestion came to the king to write to the saint and inquire about it. Acting upon this happy thought, Chilperic wrote a letter, addressed to St. Martin, and asked if he, the king, had the right to take his fugitive from the sanctuary. This letter was sent by hand to Tours, laid upon St. Martin's tomb, with a sheet of paper on which the saint might write his reply. For three days the king waited, and then sent his messenger for the saint's answer. Nothing had been written on the blank sheet, and Chilperic's irresolution increased.

Fredegonda now took control of the matter. She bribed Gonthram Boson to betray Merovius and lead him out of the sanctuary.

This scheme was successful. Merovius, weary of the inactivity of his life, was eager to get away. He believed he could elude his father's forces, and reach the kingdom of Brunehilda. That queen had been restored to her country upon the demand of the Austrasian nobles; the more readily, as Chilperic shrewdly guessed that she would stir up civil strife as soon as she got there. He was not mistaken.

Merovius then hired a band of mercenaries with Doctor Marileif's money, left the sanctuary, and set out for Metz. A.D. 577

At Auxerre, he had a skirmish with Erp, the count of that city, and was captured. Making his escape soon

afterwards, he took refuge in another sanctuary, he and the faithful Gailen. After two months, he left this refuge and set out for Austrasia, where he hoped to find wife, honours, ease, and power.

Brunehilda's son, a child, was nominally reigning in this part of France; but, in reality, the government was in the hands of a few powerful nobles and bishops. Among these there were feuds, violent and bitter, but they all agreed upon one thing, — the exclusion of Brunehilda. Ægidius, bishop of Reims, and Duke Rauking were the principal chiefs of the ruling class.

This Rauking was a parlous brute. It was an amusement of his to compel the slaves, who held torches while he supped, to put out the lights by holding them against their naked legs. The louder the slaves howled, the louder Rauking laughed.

Two of his serfs, a young man and woman, had married without his permission. This angered him deeply. The priest who had united the pair interceded for them. Duke Rauking appeared to yield, and swore an oath not to separate them. He ordered a grave dug, and into it he cast the young husband and the young wife, and buried them alive.

When he next saw the priest, Duke Rauking said to him, with a mocking sneer,—

"I have kept my oath; they are now united forever."

Such were the nobles who surrounded Brunehilda, and denied her rights as mother of the king.

Naturally enough, these ferocious animals had no welcome for Merovius. He would be in their way. His presence would strengthen the queen, and his power would diminish theirs.

Hence, they fiercely refused to consent that Merovius should live at Metz; and when that tired wanderer at length reached the home of his queen and wife, he found no shelter, no rest, no safety. He was driven away like an outlaw, and with heavy heart he went back the way he had come. Greater caution was now necessary. Hiding in the woods by day, he travelled at night, hoping to get to cover again in the sanctuary at Tours.

But Chilperic was on the watch to cut him off; and he spread his army all round Tours, burning and pillaging, and not sparing even the property of the Church.

Hounded down like a wolf, Merovius slunk further into the remote country, where the lower classes of the Franks took pity on him, and hid him. Chilperic found it impossible to effect his capture by force or surprises; and treachery was once more tried.

Fredegonda applied to Bishop Ægidius and to Gonthram Boson, and through them a plot was laid for the betrayal of the fugitive.

Certain nobles of Chilperic's dominions were sent to tempt Merovius into a conspiracy against his father. They found the place where he lay concealed, and pretended that they had come to support him in his right to the throne.

"Since thy hair has grown once more," said they to Merovius, "we will submit to thee, and are ready to abandon thy father, if thou wilt come amongst us."

Merovius fell into the snare, and at once set out with these spies of his father, accompanied by the faithful Gailen and a few others. They advanced into Chilperic's dominions, and at first Merovius was warmly welcomed, and treated like a king. At length, when he had ad-

vanced far enough to make retreat impossible, he was invited to rest in one of the farms of the Frankish inhabitants. No sooner had the doors closed upon him than they were immediately made fast, bolts shot home, windows barred, while through and round the house was heard the ominous rattle of arms.

Too late Merovius saw it all, — the trap into which he had walked. There was no escape. Mercy he had none to expect. Death in its worst form he knew had come at last, suddenly, horribly.

"Gailen," said he, "we have never had but one soul and one mind until now; do not let me fall into the hands of my enemies. I pray thee take thy sword and slay me."

The faithful companion obeyed his lord, and slew him on the spot.

The father came in great haste to seize his son, to gloat over his misery, and to put him to death with tortures. He found only a corpse.

The king wreaked his vengeance upon Gailen and the others. One, being old, was simply beheaded; another was broken on the wheel; Gailen perished more barbarously: his hands, feet, nose, and ears were cut off, and he was left to die slowly in torment.

CHAPTER V

THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS (*continued*)

The Convent of Queen Radegonda

FREDEGONDA had not yet cleared the way to the throne for her own son, and she was, therefore, not yet satisfied. Clovis, son of Chilperic, was alive, and so was Androweda, his mother. Fredegonda accused Clovis of causing the death of three of her children by sorcery. He was cast into prison, and she had him murdered. His mother, Androweda, was strangled in her convent.

At last came the turn of Chilperic himself. Fredegonda was unduly intimate with Landeric, an officer of the palace, and she suspected that her husband knew it.

King Chilperic, returning from the chase one day, in the year 584, was in the act of dismounting from his horse when he was struck two mortal blows by a man who immediately fled. The assassin was one of the queen's servants. A.D. 584

Chilperic left a son, Clotaire, only a few months old, and, as his sovereign guardian, Fredegonda, the serf, became ruler of Neustrian France. For thirteen years she maintained her position, and then died peacefully in her bed at Paris, powerful and dreaded to the last.

Of the sons of Clotaire I. only one was now alive, Gonthram. He was the saintliest of the four, and the priests loved him dearly. Chilperic had not loved the

clergy, nor they him. Their power and riches exasperated him; and he foresaw the day of their absolute domination even over kings. It gave him pleasure to annul wills made in their favour; and he would often exclaim, "See how all our wealth goes to the churches! Truly no one reigns but those bishops."

Gonthram was different. He was almost a monk in appearance and conduct, although given to concubinage, plurality of wives, and frequent relapses into savagery.

He once put several freedmen to the torture because he had lost a hunting horn; and he caused a noble Frank to be executed upon suspicion of having killed a deer on the royal domain.

In the year 580, Gonthram's second wife, Austrehilda, fell sick, and soon realized that she was dying. It occurred to her that if she could have company in death, it would be less lonely. She therefore besought her husband to promise that on the day of her funeral her two physicians should be executed. The king cheerfully consented, not having the heart to deny his wife a boon so reasonable; and on the day appointed, the king punctually had the doctors' heads cut off.

The death of his three brothers alarmed Gonthram, and he swore to pursue the murderers of Chilperic to the ninth generation, "in order to put an end to the wicked custom of killing kings."

He believed that his own life was in danger, and one day in church, after the deacon had cautioned the congregation to be silent for the hearing of the mass, King Gonthram turned to the people and said: "I pray you all, men and women, here present to be ever faithful to me, and not to slay me, as you have latterly slain my brother. Let

me live at least three years longer, so that I may rear my nephews, whom I have adopted, for fear that it should happen that after my death you should have no strong man of our family to defend you."

The people were greatly moved, and began to pray, at once, that this strong man should not be taken from them.

Fredegonda satisfied Gonthram of her innocence, convinced him that his brother, Chilperic, had been slain by emissaries of Brunehilda, and he received the terrible widow and her son, Clotaire II., at his court in Burgundy, where she bided her time.

A curious episode now followed. There was a certain Gaul, named Gundobald, whose parentage was a mystery. He had been carefully reared and educated, and had been allowed to wear his hair long, after the manner of kings. One day his mother presented him to Childebert I. and said: "This is thy nephew, the son of King Clotaire I., who hates him. Take him with thee, for he is thy flesh." Having no son, Childebert granted the request, and kept the boy near him.

Clotaire I., hearing of this, sent a messenger to his brother, Childebert, saying, "Send the young man to me, that he may be near me." Childebert complied at once, and when Clotaire looked upon the boy, he said, "He is no son of mine," and ordered that his long hair be cut off. Under Merovingian custom, this debarred the young man from the throne, or any pretensions thereto, — at least, until his hair should have grown long again.

After Clotaire's death, Gundobald was received by Charibert; but Sigibert became uneasy, for by that time the man's hair was grown suggestively and dangerously long. Sending, therefore, to Charibert for the supposed

bastard, Sigibert again had his hair cut, and dismissed him as no longer to be feared.

After living at Cologne until his locks began to be treasonous once more, and not knowing but that in clipping his hair so often his head might be clipped off also, Gundobald fled into Italy, where he was well received by Narses the eunuch, governor of that part of the Roman Empire. In Italy he married and begot sons. He then moved away to Constantinople, where his fortunes seem to have prospered under the favour of the emperors.

Now it came to pass that certain great nobles in France thought they saw an opportunity to overthrow the Merovingian dynasty, and divide the land among themselves. All the sons of Clotaire I. were dead but Gonthram, and he was one of the weakest of the weak. He had apparently been upheld only by the prowess of Mommulus, his general, and the influence of the bishops.

In the place of his brothers were women and children. It seemed to the conspirators that the moment was come to push Gonthram and the children aside, and to seize upon the kingdom for themselves.

The ringleaders of this conspiracy were Mommulus, Gonthram Boson, and the Bishop Ægidius. To cloak their designs, they determined to use Clotaire's bastard.

Gundobald was invited into France. The conspirators assured him that they believed him to be Clotaire's son, and that they wanted him for their king. They told him that the people would rise up in his support, and that they, the noble conspirators, would defend him with their lives. To this they swore, solemnly.

Gonthram Boson, the soul of the intrigue, went in per-

son to Constantinople, where Gundobald was living, and entreated him to claim his crown in France.

Gundobald yielded to the temptation, gathered up much treasure, for necessary campaign expenses, and set out from Constantinople in quest of a throne.

Landing at Marseilles, he was kindly welcomed by the bishop, and received many assurances of support from the chief nobles of the kingdom. The bishop, Theodore, furnished him with horses, and Gundobald went to Avignon, the residence of Mommulus. For some reason, not clearly stated, Gonthram Boson took offence at the bishop's action; and, in revenge, he fell upon the treasures of Gundobald and appropriated them to his own use. This was painful to Gundobald, but not necessarily hurtful to the bishop.

With a pretender in the kingdom and treason on foot, the good old king, Gonthram, found himself in peril. Naturally he called for help. His strongest hope was that Brunehilda and her son would come to his relief.

Before determining which side they would take, Brunehilda and her son, Childebert II., sent an embassy to Gonthram, asking that he restore those oft-disputed five towns, the morning gift of the murdered Galeswintha.

To add to the humiliation of the aged king, of whom this demand was made, the chiefs of the embassy were the chiefs of the conspiracy, Ægidius, the bishop, and Gonthram Boson, the comprehensive knave and marplot.

These men were so insolent in their behaviour to Gonthram, so threatening in their language, that he boiled over with wrath, abused them roundly, ordered them out of his palace, and gave orders that as they departed for

home they should be copiously pelted with mud, decayed cabbages, stale eggs, rotten fish, and dung.

His loyal subjects, sympathizing with their good old king, obeyed his orders in letter and in spirit. The ambassadors were scandalously besmirched with miscellaneous filth, despite the sanctity of the ambassadorial character, and went home furious, for indeed they smelt villanously.

Brunehilda and Childebert II. at once went over to Gundobald, and the pretender made rapid headway in the south. The nobles all declared for him, the bishops followed, and Gundobald found himself master of Toulouse, Bordeaux, and other cities of Aquitaine.

It was Gonthram's turn now to become genuinely frightened, and he did so. He made peace with Brunehilda and Childebert II., bought them off with huge concessions, and thus left Gundobald, unsupported, to face an irresistible combination.

His fall was sudden and terrible. The traitors scuttled the ship and left it, as such men usually do, each hastening to be first in betrayal, and highest in reward therefor. The very chiefs who had invited him over abandoned him, with bitter mockeries and reproaches. He was not even allowed to escape with his life and return to Constantinople. He was knocked off his horse by a chief named Ollo; and as he turned, pitiable wretch, to run, Gonthram Boson smashed his skull with a stone.

A.D. 593 The old king, Gonthram, was exceedingly wroth with his recreant nobles and bishops, and meant to have exacted stern satisfaction from them, but death overtook him and the guilty escaped.

The time for sweeping revenge seemed now to have

come to Brunehilda. She invaded Burgundy, first, to annex it; but Fredegonda was on the alert, and, with her lover, Landeric, she marched her army against the invaders.

The Neustrians carried green boughs in front of them, and thus Fredegonda's force appeared to be a moving forest. Brunehilda's troops, the Austrasians, were so startled at a sight which savoured of sorcery, witchcraft, and vague diabolism, that they took to their heels without striking a blow.

This was the last victory of Fredegonda, who soon after died. Childebert II. being dead, the whole of France fell to three children: Fredegonda's son, Clotaire II., and Brunehilda's grandsons, Theodebert II. and Theoderic II. A.D. 597

Brunehilda was now the stronger. Burgundy was added to the Austrasian kingdom, and, through her grandsons, she ruled the greater part of France. It was her policy to surround these young men with loose women, in order that they might be less inclined to concern themselves with affairs of state. To Theodebert she gave a young female slave, who had ambitious notions of her own; and this young slave managed to get the old queen banished from Theodebert's court.

Taking refuge in Burgundy with Theoderic, she made and unmade mayors of the palace, and enjoyed greater power than ever.

In the years 600–604, the Burgundians made war upon Clotaire II., beat him, and took Paris itself. Theodebert II. came to Clotaire's relief, and saved him by a treaty. But for this fatal blunder, Fredegonda's empire would have passed away, and the final triumph would have remained with her rival. A.D. 600–604

Brunehilda, enraged at seeing her prey escape her, wreaked her vengeance upon Theodebert. She caused his brother to make war upon him. Defeated by Theoderic, he was captured and slain. The infant son of Theodebert likewise fell into the hands of the victor, and one of the soldiers, by Theoderic's orders, lifted up the child by the foot and beat its brains out against a rock.

Theoderic lived only three years longer (613) and died, leaving four children. The nobles groaned at the thought of a long minority under the rule of Brunehilda, and they conspired against her.

Unconscious of the extent of her danger, Brunehilda kept up her courage, and marched against Clotaire II. with an army of German mercenaries. In the face of the enemy, she was abandoned utterly by bishops, nobles, and troops. She became a prisoner, friendless and doomed.

A.D. 613 After eighty years of restless adventure; after a long career of good and bad, of courageous struggles against adversity, and abuses of power in time of success; after a long journey, stained by many crimes and relieved by many proofs of a high, royal, and enlightened nature, this wonderful old woman was at length the prisoner of her deadliest foe, the son of Fredegonda.

Her fate was hideous, even for those hideous times.

The young savage turned the wretched old queen over to the executioners, who inflicted nameless outrages upon her for three days. Then, she was brought forth, naked, and paraded before the army on a camel's back; and then she was tied by hair, arm, and leg, to the tail of a wild horse, which, running and kicking, dashed her to pieces —she, the daughter of a king, the widow of a king, and the mother of kings.

Upon the death of Brunehilda, the entire kingdom of France was once more united under Clotaire II. A.D. 615

In 628 Dagobert succeeded his father, Clotaire II., and under him the Merovingian dynasty reached its greatest power, and showed the first symptoms of its decline. The Basques, south of the Garonne, were conquered, the dukes of the Bretons made submission, and the greater part of the Saxons, Frisians, Thuringians, Alemanni, and Bavarians paid tribute. A.D. 628

The empire of the Franks now extended from the Weser to the Pyrenees, and from the Western ocean to the frontiers of Bohemia.

Dagobert was the ally of the emperor of Constantinople, and wielded influence among all neighbouring nations.

At home he concerned himself with the administration of justice, visited all parts of his kingdom, put down lawlessness as far as he was able, founded the abbey of St. Denis, committed the laws of the various tribes to writing, and compelled the Church to disgorge a portion of the royal domains.

Before he died, his power weakened. Conquered tribes refused tribute and defied his arms.

The great crime of Dagobert's reign was his massacre of the Avars, or Bulgarians. Nine thousand of these people, having been driven from their homes in Pannonia, asked leave to settle in France. Dagobert consented, and assigned them to Bavaria. The difficulty of feeding and housing so many people soon became apparent, pressing, and perilous. To rid himself of all danger from that source, Dagobert ordered his guests murdered.

The Bavarians fell upon the unsuspecting Avars in the night, while they slept, and in one tremendous massacre

they perished, — nearly 9000 men, women, and children, the welcomed guests of a Christian king.

A.D. 638 After Dagobert, came other Merovingian kings, but none of any ability. Their long hair was their only proof of royalty. They won no honours in war, nor in peace. They let the mayors of the palace conduct the government. They kept themselves within doors, and lived lives of sloth and sensuality. A great pig in a great sty, fed and fattened at the public expense, was what the Merovingian king had become.

The people rarely saw him. Only now and then was he brought forth on public exhibition, and solemnly paraded through the streets of Paris in an ox-cart. The exhibition being over, the mayors of the palace would put the oxen in one stall and the king in another, and they would resume government while *he* would resume his place in the mire of sensuality.

The fact that these imbeciles could rule a great country from year to year, from century to century, shows the tremendous strength of any system when once established. These men were so notoriously unfit for the place they held that they were known, even in those days, as the "Do-nothing kings." Yet they continued till the year A.D. 752 752 to hold the throne. By that time the people had grown tired of the farce. The mayors of the palace, having exercised the power of royalty for several generations, assumed the title also.

The last of the Merovingians was quietly deposed, his long hair clipped, and he was shut up in a convent. He was so utterly incapable of any mischief that they thought it a useless ceremony to cut off his head.

Wild and dark are these Merovingian times; the strong

beat down the weak; the honestly industrious are despised, and the ruffianly robber is hero of the day. Gaul lies beneath the feet of armed bands. The once masterful Roman crouches in fear; for he can read Latin and write fair lines, but he can fight no more. The native Gaul, so long enslaved, and not quite so polished as the Roman, has less learning and less spirit; hence the brutal Frank, fearless, fierce, and strong, lords it over all.

He does not want to settle down to work, — what he wants is war and booty. The lust for blood, for deeds of daring, for plunder, for wine and women, consumes him, and the spirit of adventure gives him no rest.

Two sons of Clovis, about to set out upon a raid into Burgundy, ask the third son, Theodoric, to join them. He refuses, and opposes the war. Not so his followers, his companions-in-arms. "If thou refusest to march into Burgundy with thy brethren," they say to him, "we give thee up, and follow them." They are ready to die by him in battle, but not to rust with him in monotonous peace. To hold them to their allegiance, Theodoric is under the necessity of leading them to war.

In like manner, Clotaire I. is himself compelled to fight the Saxons, against whom he had led an expedition, but who have sued for peace.

"Cease, I pray you," said the king to his warriors, "to be evil-minded against these men. They speak us fair. Let us not go and attack them, lest we bring down upon us the wrath of God."

But the Franks would not listen, and insisted on war. Again the Saxons pleaded for peace, offering rich gifts and proposing to surrender half their lands. The warriors still urged Clotaire. "Hold," cried he. "We have not

right on our side. If you enter into this war, I will not lead you."

Then the enraged warriors threw themselves upon him, tore his tent to pieces, and bore him away by force, threatening to kill him if he did not march with them.

The king was compelled to lead on; but the Saxons turned upon the Franks desperately, and cut them to pieces.

The Gallo-Roman civilization rapidly disappeared. The arts of peace were despised; and those Gauls who had not been plundered at the first invasion of the Franks were pillaged now at the slightest provocation. Armed bands roved about, sometimes in the day, sometimes at night, in search of prey. The Gauls themselves sank to the level of the Frankish morals, and lost their culture, their industrious habits, and their peaceful character. On all sides, there was resort to physical force, to the rule of the strongest.

Against these raging currents of disorder, the Church reared itself like a rock. The monastery was the social Gibraltar. Educated priests, forced to study the nature of the fierce warrior from across the Rhine, soon learned how to rule him.

The man of intellect asserted his natural supremacy over the man of brawn and muscle. The Frank feared no living creature; death itself he despised; but the priest terrified him through his superstition, his ignorance, his credulity, his want of reasoning faculties. Claiming to represent God, the priest threw round the savage warrior a spell which bound him. He could not understand, and hence he trembled. Visible enemies he could defy, but foes invisible conquered him.

No monarch of earth could have summoned soldiers the Franks would have feared to meet; but the priest called to his aid the vague phantoms of the air, and the barbarians quaked with terror. The mysterious formulas of Christian worship, the signs and symbols, the prayers, songs, and incantations, the dreadful curse of excommunication, the confident claim of miraculous powers from on high, — all these chained the mind of the Frank, and held him, half-rebelliously, in spiritual bondage.

Not afraid of the priest, he was afraid of the power back of the priest. His terror was all the greater because he did not know what this power was, or what it would do.

"Wah! Wah! What is this being that drags down the strength of the strongest kings?" cried the dying Clotaire. And so it was with the others; they felt the power of the Invisible, and they trembled before it.

The monastery, then, became a fortress, a refuge, a nucleus of order. Dimly enough, the light of learning continued to burn within its walls. Whatever books remained were there. Whatever of purity and culture survived was there. The farms around the convent were the only prosperous farms, for they alone enjoyed protection. The schools of the convent were poor enough, but excepting these there were none at all. Steady streams of wealth flowed in upon the monastery, its revenues being greater and more certain than those of the State; hence there was plenty at the convent when there might be dearth in the hall.

Ambitious men sought the monastery, because abbots, bishops, and cardinals were more powerful than kings, their tenure of office securer, and their emolument richer. Peaceable men sought the same shelter, because nowhere

else were they safe. Studious men took orders because nowhere else could they find books, seclusion, and quiet. Rich men turned churchwards to save their wealth from robbers. Poor men took the same route, because nowhere else were they assured of light work and good homes. The slave fled to the monastery, because there he was certain of indulgent masters and humane treatment. Persecuted innocence sought it because only there were the weak defended against the violence of the strong. Conscious guilt sought it, because it alone threw charitable refuge over crime, and allowed the hunted sinner time for repentance and pardon in the precincts of the sanctuary.

In later times, too much power led to abuses of it; too much wealth led to idleness and corruption. But it can be said with truth that the monasteries were bulwarks of order in the disorderly days of the Merovingians. They were conservators of peace, guardians of morals, champions of right, protectors of the weak, and homes to the poor, the friendless, the broken in spirit.

* * * * * * * * *

In the year 529 Clotaire I. made war upon the Thuringians, he and his brother Theodoric. The Franks were victorious. Much booty and many prisoners were taken. Among the captives who fell to the lot of Clotaire were two children of the royal house of Thuringia, the son and daughter of King Berther. The girl was so beautiful that Clotaire determined to take her to himself; but, as she was only eight years of age, she was put into one of his palaces to be reared and educated. The young princess was gifted with mental qualities of a high order, and she received not the simple training usual with German girls,

but the wider education of a rich lady of Gaul. Roman language and literature were taught her, and she became acquainted with all the beauties of the profane writers of Rome. She grew enthusiastic in her love of books, and her piety was as genuine as her love of literature. The coarse life of the average Frank she abhorred.

As she grew older, the fate which awaited her filled her with terror. Clotaire was to her a barbarian, the murderer of her family, the spoiler of her native land. She hated and loathed him; to become his wife was a punishment worse than death. Overpowered by her fears, she fled from the palace to escape marriage with him, but was caught and brought back. Forced to become one of Clotaire's wives (538), she endured him for several years, but so coldly and reluctantly that he himself said, "It is a nun I have got, not a queen."

She busied herself in good works, tended the sick, ministered to the poor, and avoided her brute of a husband as far as possible. Her brother, who had likewise grown up in captivity, gave Clotaire some offence, and the young prince was put to death.

This was too much; the outraged woman could endure it no longer.

Feigning a desire to seek consolation from her bishop, she went to Noyon, under escort of Frankish warriors.

Radegonda found the bishop officiating at the altar, and she broke forth, in her great distress: "Most holy priest, I wish to leave this world, and to change my costume. Consecrate me, I pray thee, to the service of the Lord."

The bishop was thunderstruck, and he became greatly afraid; for to take a king's wife from him was a daring thing to do.

The Frankish warriors, terribly alarmed at the thought of going back to Clotaire without the queen, surrounded the priest, and cried, "Do not dare to give the veil to her — her, the king's wife." They laid hands upon him and dragged him from the steps of the altar, while the queen ran into the vestry. In her despair, she caught up a nun's dress, which chanced to be near, and threw it over her own, and marched back towards the sanctuary where the bishop sat, sad and irresolute.

"If thou delayest to consecrate me," cried the queen, firmly, "and fearest men more than God, the shepherd will demand of thee the soul of his lamb."

She had touched the right chord then. The sad and doubtful bishop thrilled to it as the soldier wakes to the call of the bugle. He doubted no longer, feared no longer, but resolutely facing the peril and the duty, he annulled her marriage on the spot, and consecrated her a deaconess.

The Frankish warriors were awed by the enthusiasm of the queen and the courage of the priest; they went their way, murmuring and marvelling.

The queen had come to the church in her royal robes, resplendent in purple, in gold, in jewels. She stripped off her jewels and her ornaments — "Lay these on the altar." She broke her massive gold armlets with her own hands — "Give these to the poor."

Then she thought of her own safety, and she fled away to another church, and to another, a hunted fugitive, fleeing the wrath of the wild Clotaire. Not daring to put foot beyond the sanctuaries, her life was almost that of a criminal and an outlaw, and she knew no rest, night nor day.

Petition after petition she sent to the king, all to no

purpose. Bishops intervened and negotiated, without success. The king stormed and threatened, and the queen continued to resist and to plead.

Frightened by his threats, she fled to Poitiers, a sanctuary far from the king. Clotaire in person set out for Poitiers, swearing to lay hands on her and bring her back. He got no further than Tours. There the bishop, Germain, stopped him, and talked to him in so firm a tone that the barbarian drew back — afraid of that vague, mystic power of the Church which had awed stronger men than he, and held them fast.

Clotaire not only agreed to let his wife go in peace, but surrendered to her own use the morning gift which he had bestowed upon her at their marriage.

With this she founded the convent of Poitiers, — built in the form of a Roman villa, and dedicated to the religious, literary, and domestic culture of women.

Here the ex-queen lived a dream life for thirty years. In useful work, in literary recreation, in harmless amusements, in helpful charities, in the forming of pious, womanly character, year after year rolled past the cloister and carried with them no breath of scandal, no stain of pride or sin.

The queen did not herself ask to be made abbess. Agnes, a girl of Gallic race, much younger than herself, and whom she had loved from infancy, was named Mother Superior; and the queen, a simple nun, took her turn at all the work, — cooked, swept, carried wood and water, as the others did; but yet she, as foundress, royal by birth, royal by mental gifts, and royal in queenly soul and heart, was the empress, uncrowned, of this ideal kingdom of the chaste and the good.

After fifteen years, there came to this monastery a Roman poet, Venantius Fortunatus.

This man was genial and gifted, elegant in manner, a courtier by nature and profession. The pet of Gallo-Roman aristocratic circles, he travelled from province to province, a welcome guest in all palaces, turning his verses and his flatteries with equal art. He could soothe the proud nobles of Gaul and soften the fierce chiefs of the Franks. In short, he was a literary man of the world; suave, insinuating, plausible, refined, and accomplished. He paid poetical court to the bishops, praised them in neat verse; and, at the marriage feasts of kings, he laid his offering of polished Latin odes at the feet of the barbarian monarchs, who did not understand what it all meant, but who were thoroughly pleased, nevertheless.

Thus Fortunatus ambled about from one snug shelter to another — something of an Epicurean; soft of hand, soft of speech, but understanding quite well how to steer his flower-wreathed boat along the turbulent current of the Merovingian stream.

In 567 Fortunatus wanders up to Poitiers and, attracted by the fame of the ex-queen and her nunnery, must, of course, pay it a visit. He is given a royal welcome. His reputation had preceded him, and Radegonda and Agnes felt honoured by his visit. The gay and genial poet found himself at once in sympathetic company. His every word was eagerly heard, his talent appreciated, his vanity flattered, and his heart warmed by the evident admiration of these lovely and distinguished listeners. So delicious to the brilliant waif was this sympathetic friendship of two amiable, educated, and refined women, that he

lingered on, week after week, month after month, drinking in all the enjoyment of companionship so charming.

When, at length, he faintly murmured something about moving on, Radegonda sighed, "Why should you go? Why not remain with us?"

Not being particularly anxious to find a reason for going away, the poet found none; and so he remained — remained to be near the queen, whom he loved and revered. He settled at Poitiers, took orders, and became a priest of the metropolitan church.

Thus, without scandal, he could be near Agnes and the queen. And he was most useful to them. The convent had much property; he looked after it, guarded it from pillage, kept on good terms with influential bishops and nobles, and saved the ladies of the house great trouble and loss. He was wise, amiable, and capable, and thus he became the spiritual father of the abbey, the guide of its abbess and of the queen.

Their esteem for him never grew less. He was just the man to hold their admiration. The contrast between him — courtly, cultured, and kind — and the barbarians, such as they had been accustomed to endure, was so great that Fortunatus became something like an ideal to these simple women, who, most of them, knew little of the great world beyond their walls.

They flattered his vanity by personal attentions and by praise of his verses; they ministered to his Epicurean tastes with dainty dishes; they pleased his love of the beautiful by wreathing his dining-room with flowers and by covering his table with roses. A language of tenderness and respect graced their companionship; and their devotion was so touching, and so pure, that nothing could be more

like that ideal existence which is, to most people, but a dream.

Radegonda was of deeper nature than the poet. She often said, "I am a poor captive woman." She was a relic of the wars — her people were dead; her kingdom lost; no tie of blood united her to anything in France. She was alone.

But although she was nearing the age of fifty, and her hair was streaked with white, she had not forgotten her home, her parents, and her kindred. She plaintively said:

"I have seen women carried off into slavery, with hands tied and hair streaming. One walked barefooted in the blood of her husband, another passed over the corpse of her brother. Each one has had cause for tears, and I, I have wept for all. A whole world separates me from what I love most. Where are they, my kindred, my friends? When my tears cease to flow, my grief is not hushed."

Such was life in this convent 1300 years ago. Here was religion without severity; peace without idleness; dignity without pride; seclusion without selfishness; affectionate companionship without sin.

Think, then, of this little world, within the larger world; for this cloister is but one of many, and it is a vital portion of the social, political, and religious fabric of the times.

Within the convent all is serene; without, all is storm and strife. Within there is peace and love, the charities, and refined graces of life; without there is war and hate, cruel wrongs and rough barbarities of word, speech, and deed.

Clotaire, raging like a wild savage, rushes upon a re-

bellious son and burns him — he and his wife and children. Brunehilda intrigues and murders; Fredegonda poisons and stabs; Chilperic butchers and wastes; cities go up in flames; fields are trampled by the war-horse; the dead lie piled in heaps where they fell; and ruffians hew and hack fellow-ruffians from one end of France to the other.

The great noisy world rolls by with all its struggles for honours, and wealth, and power; men slay and are slain, cheat and are cheated, crush and are crushed — in the mad race.

Infinitely sweeter is the other picture, — the simple joys, the quiet usefulness, the loving charity, the tender companionship, the bloodless hand which saves rather than kills.

Thus, in the age of grossness, refinement did not die; in a reign of blood and rapine, white peace won sinless triumphs. The work of the king perished; that of the queen endured. He built furiously and savagely, on the sand; she, gently and humanely, on the rock. Of Clotaire's work, naught remains; a brute of brutes, he went as the brutes go, and left no trace. Of the queen's work, all remains as a lofty example — nothing died but the queen.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS; ORIGIN OF ARISTOCRACY

The Carlovingian Kings: Pepin, Charlemagne, Louis the Handsome and his Sons

LET us remember that we have at least three different racial elements in Merovingian France. There is the Gaul, who has become partially Romanized; there is the Roman himself; and there is the Frank; of these three elements the Gaul is the weakest. The Roman bishop and the Frankish chief unite, and the combination is irresistible.

Before the invasion of the Franks, the municipal system was highly organized in Gaul. The Roman Empire was a government of towns; no political influence emanated from the rural communities; in fact, rural life, as we now know it, did not then exist. The people dwelt in the town — even those whose daily work carried them out into the fields. It was only in the neighbourhood of the towns that the soil was cultivated; elsewhere it was covered by woods, and was wilderness or marsh.

These towns enjoyed local self-government as a rule, so far as internal affairs were concerned; and each of them was a separate and distinct political body which sought no connection with the others. Indeed, it is a curious fact that when the Roman emperor, hoping to call into

life a national spirit and create a confederation sufficiently strong to resist barbarian inroads, offered to allow the towns of Gaul to form a general confederacy, which should have representative government, the towns rejected the offer and refused to elect delegates; to such an extent had the Roman system destroyed national spirit. The law administered in the towns was the Roman civil law.

With the Franks, law and government were essentially different. As already stated, the Germans were a people without towns, just as they were without a priestly caste, an aristocracy, an hereditary ruler, or a system of private ownership of land. Yet the conquered Roman imposed upon the conquering Frank his religion, his law, his political system, and his theory of property.

We have already seen how the Franks became Christians. Let us study other changes equally radical.

The chiefs of the Franks always had attached to their personal service in war a band of youths, chosen for their strength, courage, and fidelity. Cæsar had remarked a similar institution among the Gauls. This personal body-guard was devoted to the chief. If he died in battle, they perished also; it was a disgrace to survive him.

This chosen band was called by the Romans the *comitatus;* by the Germans the leudes, or companions of the chief.

Now, it naturally followed that, in a successful campaign, the chief would handsomely reward his devoted body-guard. Up to the time of the conquest of Gaul, the Frankish chiefs had nothing more to give than horses, arms, and chattels taken from temples or towns; in the conquest of France, however, there were enormous tracts of land to divide among the conquerors. As Clovis grew

more powerful, he allowed the custom of equal division to fall into disuse. Money, bright cloth, and chattels of sundry kinds were good enough for the common soldier; the land and the houses he kept for himself, the bishop, and the leudes.

Thus the favoured body-guard of the chief grew into a landed aristocracy; and Clovis rested his throne on two foundations, — the nobles and the priests.

By the same growth of wealth and power in the hands of a victorious chief, the election of kings soon became a farce. Whoever the nobles and the bishops supported became king. No longer did the freemen of the tribe meet, listen to the candidates, murmur dissent when displeased, clash spears upon shields when satisfied, and bear high upon a buckler the man of their choice. Clovis himself had obtained his own crown in this manner, but his vast addition to the wealth and the influence of the kingly office annihilated the elective principle, so far as the common people were concerned.

The same causes overthrew the democratic form under which the Germans had governed themselves. Clovis had crushed the Frankish chiefs, and had moulded their separate dominions into one great kingdom. It was no longer possible for the tribesmen to meet and discuss national affairs as the tribesmen of the separate chiefs had formerly done. The territory was too large. The representative principle was not a part of their system, and when they could not meet in person, they no longer met at all. Thus self-government passed out of their hands and power was lodged in the hands of the king.

This, however, was true of national affairs only; in local matters each tribe still ruled itself, for, while Roman

law governed Gauls and Romans, the Frankish law governed the Franks.

To the bishops, the doctrine of the absolute power of kings was familiar, for they got it from the Roman law. It suited their Church government, and it suited the ambition of Frankish kings; therefore these rulers soon became absolutists, forgetting utterly that in the beginning they had been merely the elected chiefs of a free tribe.

While the Germans roamed over the primitive forests of Germany, community of property in land suited them; but now all was changed. Here were houses in Gaul worth having; clustered vineyards, orchards laden with fruit, fields yellowing with bountiful harvests. All these were tempting to the individual man; and he began to wish for a permanent home, such as Romans and Gauls possessed.

The Roman law encouraged this desire, and the bishops and the king united in gratifying it. Private ownership of land took the place of tribal communism, and the doctors of the law even introduced the theory that the title to it all was vested in the king, and that he alone could dispose thereof.

The first of the mayors of the palace whom it is necessary to mention was called Pippin, or Pepin, of Heristal. A.D. 687

He was duke (leader) of the Austrasian Franks, and belonged to a noble family, which the conquest of Gaul had enriched. He allowed the nominal king to keep up the appearance of royalty, and even showed him at rare intervals, in an ox-cart procession, through the streets of Paris; but Pepin was the real king. Other Frankish nobles resented this, and made war upon him. As a political necessity Pepin revived the right of popular as-

semblies, and by calling the people together once a year he obtained their good will and their support, thus making himself strong and maintaining his supremacy. Under his wise rule, France was victorious and prosperous.

Pepin died in 714 and, leaving no legitimate son, his power was grasped by Charles Martel, one of his bastards. After some fierce fighting, Charles made good his position and became as much the king of France as Pepin had been.

A.D. 732 His most famous and important work was the winning of the great battle of Tours, wherein he overthrew the Saracens, and turned back, for all time, the onset of Mohammedanism.

Charles died in 739, admired of all the world but unloved by the Church; for this stalwart soldier had seized upon certain clerical property and appropriated it to the service of the State, in its time of need. In revenge, the monks circulated the story that they had dug into Charles' grave and found there nothing but an ugly dragon. This was a figurative way of saying that Charles was in hell, and that they were glad of it. In fact, one of the bishops went so far as to say, under oath, that he himself had seen, with his own eyes, Charles Martel burning in the flames of the everlasting fire.

A Merovingian figurehead, named Childeric III., was nominally reigning king when Pepin the Short succeeded his father, Charles Martel, as uncrowned king.

After securely seating himself, Pepin determined to get rid of the Merovingian shadow of a king. The support of a majority of the nobles was obtained, and then he turned

A.D. 751 to the bishop of Rome, or Pope as he was now called, and asked him to decide who should be king of France; Chil-

deric, who had the title but lacked the ability, or himself, who had the ability but lacked the title. The Pope decided in Pepin's favour, a previous arrangement having been made to that effect.

The assembly of the nobles, having voted that Pepin should be their king, lifted him on their bucklers, after the ancient custom, amid the clashing of iron spears upon iron shields, and Bishop Boniface anointed him with the oil which had come directly from heaven, and without which his title would not have been sacred in the eyes of the faithful. A.D. 752

Soon after his coronation Pepin invaded Italy, made bloody war upon the Lombard settlers, took a large part of their country, and made a gift of it to the Pope.

This donation of territory became the foundation of the temporal power of the popes. Previous to this, they had exercised spiritual dominion only. But when they usurped the right of deciding that Pepin should be king of France, instead of the reigning monarch, they had seized a power which was to prove as terrible to kings as it was to the people.

There is nothing more dangerous than a precedent, nothing harder to combat than a claim once admitted; therefore the wise man of all generations has repeated the warning, "Resist the Beginnings."

We have in this episode a striking illustration of the manner in which national affairs are transacted.

An officer of the royal household wants to become a king. He reaches an understanding, not with the people, but with the Pope and the grandees. The reigning monarch is shut up in a cloister, and the officer is made king. The new monarch marches over the Alps with an army,

captures cities and towns and much territory, and donates them to the Pope.

Thus the ambitious officer gets a kingdom, and the Pope gets a principality. What did it cost? The lives of many brave Frenchmen, whose bones bleached on the plains of Lombardy, far from wife and child and home. What did the people get out of the trade? Nothing. They got the privilege of doing the work and the fighting — of losing their lives in a quarrel which was not theirs. This is the one privilege which the plain common people can always count on.

A.D. 768 Pepin was succeeded by his son Charles, who is known to history and romance as Charlemagne. He was a great man. His reign affords the only period of light which can be found in the Middle Ages; before him were centuries of confusion, of darkness; and after him they came again.

Charlemagne ruled a mighty realm, which embraced Germany, France, part of Italy, and part of Spain. He endeavoured to bring into harmony and cohesion the many nations of whom his empire was composed, and as long as he lived, he succeeded; when he died, no other hand was equal to the task.

A.D. 774 He was engaged in numerous wars, and was one of the greatest of conquerors. He pushed back the Saracens in Spain, the Avars and Huns on the Danube, and completely subdued the Saxons. With these people he struggled for thirty years. They were so hardy, so independent, and so courageous that they fought till they were almost exterminated. He had 4500 Saxon prisoners beheaded in one day.

When the work of conquest was finally accomplished,

and the spirit of resistance broken, he compelled the survivors to receive Christian baptism.

He adopted, for the spread of the religion of Christ, the same brutal methods used by the followers of Mahomet—fire and sword. Thus the royal Christian acted upon the assumption that a battle-field, strewn with the mangled, the dying, and the dead, was the best pulpit from which to preach the gospel of "Thou shalt not kill."

The Franks had once prided themselves on being a free people, who exercised self-government. Every Frank had formerly a right to attend the annual assembly, and take part in its discussions and its decisions. But gradually the large landowners, the bishops, and the kings took charge of this congress of the free people, and ran it to suit themselves. The masses had, as usual, found it impossible to organize themselves to resist the encroachment of the stronger class.

Hence we are not surprised to read that when this great assemblage of the Franks convened annually, in the time of Charlemagne, the bishops and the wealthy nobles would retire to legislative halls, built for the purpose, and that doorkeepers were appointed to keep the common folk out.

While the grandees were taking counsel as to the laws which they most desired, the king would saunter round among the people, asking after their health, and inquiring for the latest news from their neighbourhoods. When the grandees had agreed on a legislative programme, they reported it to the king, and if it seemed good in his sight, his sanction made it binding; otherwise it was null and void. It was his to initiate and to approve; the self-government of the Franks had become supplanted by an absolute monarchy.

In these days there were no taxes in France. The king and his nobles and the Church owned all the land. The people who owned none worked for those who did, and the landowner left the labourer barely enough to live on. Thus the king was supported by his private property. So were the nobles. There was no system of taxation, because the mass of the people had nothing to tax, while the grandees, both of Church and State, were too powerful to submit to the burden. Occasionally a king could rob an unpopular noble or bishop, and thus replenish his purse, but constant and systematic taxation had not then been devised.

Dues to the king were paid by service in his army. When the lands of the Gauls, or other tribes, were seized by the invaders, they were divided among the victors, and each man receiving a portion of the land thus won, engaged himself to help defend it.

Upon this foundation the feudal system was built, and under its operation the kingdom became a military establishment. There were certain of the chiefs who had received large tracts of territory from the monarch himself, and were bound to serve him with a certain number of troops in war. Then each of these chiefs let out portions of his land to less prominent warriors, who were to serve the chiefs when called on, just as the chiefs served the king. Thus armed bands of men were bound to each chief, and he became a petty king himself. About the first thing he did was to build him a strong castle in which he could defend himself from his enemies, and from which he could sally forth to the attack of his neighbours.

In this castle he kept all the style of a king. In his dominions he was undisputed master. Life and liberty

were subject to his arbitrary will; he claimed and exercised the right to coin money, to make laws, and to wage war on his private enemies. Such a system, of course, made life and property insecure. If a commoner had a small tract of his own, he felt powerless among these contending nobles and would surrender his land to them in return for their protection. Thus it was inevitable that the feudal system should concentrate into the hands of a few petty despots all the lands of France. These favoured few were, of course, confined to the victorious Franks.

When these Germans first conquered the country, they held it to be the fruit of their common courage and labour. Now, however, by neat shifts of law, a few of the Franks possessed what all had won. The Gauls and the weaker Franks were in the same condition; neither owned any of the land.

Charlemagne was a tireless worker, and was of simple, manly habits. His moral character was faulty, but in matters of form he set a good example. He founded schools, and encouraged learning. He himself used to study in one of these schools, after he had passed middle age. He learned Latin and Greek, but never was able to master the art of writing. Very few people in these days could write their names. He was fond of attending church, and used to lead the choir in singing.

Charlemagne was a devoted friend to the Church, and in all his wars it reaped great benefits. He appointed the bishops to high offices in the State. He enlarged the privileges of the Church so as to free it from the royal jurisdiction, and, as he thoroughly agreed with the clericals that the repeal of the Mosaic Code and the old dispensation left the law of one tenth assessment untouched, he estab-

lished tithes all over the kingdom. Each parishioner was compelled to pay them to his Church, and they were divided into three parts; one for the repair and ornamentation of the church building, one for the poor and for strangers, and the third for the priests.

As his father had done, Charlemagne made war upon the Lombards of Italy, at the instance of the Pope, and gave to the Church the lands he thus acquired. In return, the Pope bestowed upon the king the title of Emperor of the Roman Empire of the West, and officially consecrated
A.D. 800 him to that shadowy office. This occurred on Christmas Day of the year 800, and the event was, politically, of vast importance. It marked a further development of the papal claim to fill and to unfill the thrones of earthly kingdoms.

Charlemagne, however, was no slave of the priests. He recognized religion as a great fact, and used it wisely for the purposes of government. He made himself master in Church affairs as he did in affairs of State, and even arrogated to himself the right to correct the Pope in matters of dogma. For instance, he rebuked the Pope and the Empress Irene of the Eastern Empire for holding that images should be allowed in Christian churches.

In his simplicity he held that all image worship was idolatry. Calling his bishops together, in 794, he caused the action of Pope Hadrian and his council of Nicæa to be condemned. Not content with this, Charlemagne firmly reminded the Pope that it was his special business to pray and not to meddle with affairs of State. This preëminence which the emperor asserted is still further shown by the fact that he summoned Pope Leo III. to appear before

him, and clear himself of certain charges which had been brought against him.

The fame of Charlemagne spread throughout the earth, and his friendship was sought by princes far and near. The Caliph Haroun Al Raschid, of whom we read in the "Arabian Nights," sent him an embassy and costly presents,—one of these being a bronze water-clock, on which the hours were struck by golden bells.

Old age, however, chilled him, as it does the meanest of us all; and the burden of the years brought him sorrow. His favourite sons were dead; seeds of dissension and of internal trouble were already cropping up; the roving bands of Danes and Normans were hovering on the frontier, and the future seemed so dark to the aged emperor that he thought of it with sadness, and spoke of it with tears. He died in 814, at Aix-la-Chapelle. There A.D. 814 the restless warrior and tireless civilizer was buried, in a sitting posture, as though on a throne; and they left the crown on his head, the sword and sceptre by his side, and a shield at his feet; on his lap lay an open Bible, and upon it rested the little purse in which he had carried alms-money on his pilgrimages to Rome.

As soon as the hands of the great emperor were taken from it, the mighty fabric, which they had upheld, tottered. There was no cohesion among the different kingdoms out of which he had formed his empire; they had merely been drawn together by his colossal strength, and when he died, the ill-joined pieces fell apart. His reign had been a constant struggle for order, and his death gave rise to disorder again. His work had been to regenerate, improve, harmonize, pacify, and Christianize; he was the light of the Middle Ages. He died, and

all was dark again — darker, by contrast, than it had been before.

No wonder men's thoughts turned back to him in after years. No wonder they turned piteously from the scenes of blood and turmoil, of feeble kings, insolent nobles, and rapacious priests, and looked back, reverently, upon the towering figure of Charlemagne.

Around his name, legends grew. Romance embellished his mighty deeds, and gave immortal fame to the paladins who had stood near him. Poets chanted his triumphs; his very defeats were made glorious in story and song. No great ruler ever waged more wars, won more battles, or died more victorious; yet of all his battles we know most of Roncesvalles — the bloody skirmish wherein the Basques rushed from their mountain passes and cut down his rear-guard in the Pyrenees. The poets took possession of the field, and have held it ever since, consecrating it to the memory of the brave, — to Roland the matchless, and all those who, beside him, died for honour and the king.

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A.D. 814 The adage that mere good nature is only a fool was never illustrated better than by Louis the Handsome, son and successor of Charles the Great. As curate of some country parish he would have been the ideal Christian leader, pure in heart, gentle in speech, holy in life, conciliatory, charitable, and forgiving. As a king he was one of the most conspicuous failures that ever wore a crown.

Before he had got the reins of government well in hand, he began to act the part of a reformer. The royal palace

was infested with a number of concubines, a legacy of Charlemagne, who sought the love of woman after the manner of David; which scandalized his pious son. Louis put these women out of the house; and, at the same time, gave his sisters great annoyance by expelling the lovers whom they had installed in the palace. If the reformer had paused there, all would have been well, but it is difficult for a genuine reformer to stop when once he gets in motion. There are so many things, social, religious, and political, which the reformer fancies he could improve, that his self-imposed task grows upon him.

Louis was no exception to the rule, and he soon had many reforms on foot. He punished wrong-doing in high places, destroyed a multitude of abuses, curbed the bishops, and required the clergy to conform to the stern discipline of St. Benedict. In this manner the king made himself loved mildly by the people, and hated fiercely by the nobles and the bishops, whom he had crossed. Besides, he lowered his character by the monkish turn which his piety assumed. He was the first of the kings who fell down, at full length, on the ground, in presence of the Pope, and grovelled in the dust before him. It made his people ashamed. They were Catholics, but they had not ceased to be men; and they blushed to see one man so abase himself before another.

In the hope of disarming the hostility aroused by his reforms, Louis made lavish donations to the leading malcontents. Instead, however, of disarming his enemies by this course, he disarmed himself. The giving away of the royal domains left him without financial resources; for there was no revenue coming to him except from his own property. Public taxation had not yet been imposed.

A.D. 817, 818 To make matters worse, Louis divided his empire with his sons. His nephew, Bernard, whom Charlemagne had made king of Italy, resented this division as unjust to himself, and rebelled; Louis gathered a large army and marched against him. Bernard saw the hopelessness of the struggle and gave himself up to his uncle, on the faith of a safe-conduct. Louis, weakly listening to the counsels of his wife, who coveted Italy for her sons, violated his pledge to Bernard and had his eyes put out, from which frightful punishment he died a few days afterwards.

A.D. 822 Louis was really a Christian, and he suffered such remorse for this crime that he did public penance for it, a few years later, prostrating himself at the feet of the bishops, and humbly pleading for absolution at their hands. This extreme act of humility did not add to the prestige of the well-meaning king.

No longer repressed by the heavy hand of Charles the Great, neighbouring peoples assailed the empire. The Saracens, the Slavs, the Basques, the Bretons, and the Normans broke into the provinces adjacent to them and carried havoc wherever they went; but Louis acted with considerable vigour, and succeeded in restoring order on the frontiers.

At home, however, he could not keep peace; and his life became one of constant warfare with his sons.

He had married a second wife, named Judith, and by her had a son named Charles. Naturally, he wished to make provision for this Benjamin of his old age, but having already divided the empire among his children by the first marriage, he could only provide for Charles by taking back a portion of what had been given the others. The older brothers were human enough to object to

the proposition; hence, an Iliad of woes to Louis, and to France.

The elder sons stirred up a rebellion against their father; and all the people who had been irritated by his reforms took occasion to revenge themselves. The combination against the good-natured emperor was too strong for him, and he surrendered himself to his sons. They shut Judith up in a convent, left Louis in charge of some monks, and Lothaire seized upon the government.

He soon grew odious to his brothers and to the nobles and bishops. A conspiracy was formed against him, a national assembly convoked at Nimeguen, and Louis was restored to his throne. A.D. 830

Influenced by his wife Judith, Louis walked straightway into fresh trouble. He seized upon the dominions of his son Pepin, and gave them to Charles.

This aroused the other sons of the first marriage, and they joined forces and marched against their father, accompanied by the Pope. A bloody struggle seemed at hand, but treachery had done its work, and the pious king found himself deserted by all those who had come out to fight for him. Again he was made captive. With great expressiveness, the field where this colossal perfidy took place was called the field of lies. A.D. 833

The son Lothaire subjected the father, Louis, to a memorable humiliation. The captive emperor was brought before an immense crowd in the cathedral of Soissons, and there he knelt, pale and trembling, at the feet of the bishops. A cloth of horsehair was spread at the foot of the altar, and the bishop commanded the sovereign to lay aside the sceptre, robe, and crown, and to prostrate himself upon the horsehair cloth. Louis obeyed. With his

face bowed to the ground, he read aloud a paper in which he was made to accuse himself of sacrilege and murder.

Lothaire witnessed it all and gloated over his father's shame. The unnatural son then led his father away into captivity in Germany. An assembly of nobles and priests formally declared Louis deposed, and Lothaire emperor.

A.D. 834 The other two sons of Louis by his first marriage, Pepin and Louis, became jealous of their brother Lothaire, suspecting that he was growing too great, and might take a fancy to imprison brothers as well as father. They rose against him, and the people, pitying the good King Louis, rallied to their support. A national assembly met at Thionville, annulled the acts of the former assembly, and declared Louis restored to his title and his power. Thus a second time he resumed his crown.

A.D. 838 But he could not keep out of trouble. In 838 he partially disinherited his elder sons in favour of Charles, his son by Judith, and again the family feud flamed into open war. His son Louis revolted, and the Saxons and Thuringians came to his support.

A.D. 840 The emperor, now old and infirm, was marching against his son, when death halted him. "Alas," said he in his dying moments, "I forgive my son; but let him remember that he has slain his father, and that God punishes parricides."

Lothaire had taken no part in this last war, for the reason that he and his father had come to amicable terms, and Pepin was dead.

For ten years after the death of Louis the Handsome there was chaos. The heirs at law furiously fought over the inheritance. Lothaire, Louis, and Charles, sons of the late emperor, and his grandson Pepin, levied troops

throughout the empire and fell upon each with savage ferocity. Thousands of herdsmen, of farmers, and of workmen in the towns were pulled away from their business and their homes, to fight out the disputes of these royal wranglers. At one tremendous battle, fought near Fontenay, between the sons of Louis, it is said that 300,000 men were engaged, and that 100,000 were left dead upon the field. A.D. 841

One hundred thousand homes were made desolate on that dreadful day at Fontenay. One hundred thousand wives and mothers and daughters looked vainly through tear-dimmed eyes for the return of the soldier who would never come again,—for the victim who had been dragged from field and fireside to shed his blood in a quarrel that had no earthly interest for him.

Did either of these greedy and jealous brothers get killed? By no means. They rode away from the battle-field without having received a scratch, leaving the plains so covered with the dead and the dying that even a rough old officer who took part in it wrote: "Accursed be this day! Eye ne'er hath seen more fearful slaughter; in streams of blood fell Christian men; and the linen vestments of the dead did whiten the plain even as it is whitened by the birds of autumn."

In this battle Lothaire was defeated, but not crushed. He raised other forces and continued the war; but in 843 the brothers agreed to come to a friendly division, and this was done by the Treaty of Verdun. To Louis fell Germany, to Lothaire Italy and the Low Countries, to Charles fell France, and thus the hopes of Judith and Louis the Handsome were at length realized. The youngest child had got a kingdom at the cost of years A.D. 843

of war, millions of property destroyed, and a million of men butchered in battle.

During this long period of civil war, the utmost misery prevailed among the people. They were not only overrun by the contending forces of the brothers, but foreign foes appeared on all sides. The Saracens ravaged the south; the Normans came up the Seine in 300 boats and pillaged Paris itself, sacking the undefended towns and driving the people before them into captivity.

The nobles and priests increased their power and wealth under the weak King Charles, surnamed the Bald, and they wrung from him the celebrated edict of Kiersey, wherein he recognized the hereditary character of their titles to their provinces. From this period dates the supremacy of the feudal nobility over the central authority of the king.

A.D. 877 To Charles the Bald succeeded Louis the Stammerer, and several other imbeciles, one after another, until Charles the Fat comes to break the chain of succession. Too feeble to govern his kingdom, the nobles governed and misgoverned it. Too cowardly to defend his capital from the Normans, the glory of the task fell upon Count Eudes. Not daring to fight the invaders, he bought them off with 700 pounds of silver, and by conceding to them A.D. 887 the privilege of plundering Burgundy. Outraged at this baseness, the national assembly met and deposed him in 887.

This wretched descendant of Charlemagne lost all — empire, wealth, friends, family — and was indebted to the charity of the bishop of Mayence for the necessaries of life.

One of his nephews, Arnold, had been chosen emperor, and to this nephew the disgraced Charles addressed a

piteous appeal for relief. The prayer was heard, and the old man was given a small pension. He died in 888—assassinated, according to some authorities.

Count Eudes, elected king of France, was recognized by the Emperor Arnold. He resisted the Norman invaders with great courage, and maintained himself successfully against the pretensions of Charles the Simple, a Carolingian, who was a direct descendant of Charlemagne.

Eudes, who died in 898, was not succeeded by his son, A.D. 898 but by Charles the Simple, the Carolingian who has already been mentioned. His reign was not glorious, but he happened, providentially it would seem, upon a wise settlement with the Normans. He ceded to them A.D. 912 the province called, from them, Normandy, and thus converted assailants of the kingdom into defenders.

The difference between northern ideas of personal independence, and the courtly servility which had grown up in France, was curiously illustrated when Rollo, chief of the Normans, came to do homage to Charles the Simple for the fief of Normandy. Court etiquette and feudal usage required that Rollo should kiss Charles' foot; but he scornfully refused. "My knee shall never bend to mortal; and I will not, on any account, be persuaded to kiss the foot of any one whatever!"

So Rollo thus defies slavish custom, standing upon the pride of a man. Feudal law being quite inexorable on the subject, the French courtiers, an ever-ingenious race, suggest that Rollo do the kissing by deputy. It is thought that one of the common soldiers of the Norman band will answer quite as well as Rollo. Whereupon, one of the soldiers present is told to kiss the king's foot. Instead of kneeling humbly, and laying a gentle kiss

upon the shoe as was expected, the soldier roughly caught hold of Charles' foot, jerked it up to his mouth, tilting the monarch backward, and coming very near to throwing him down; thus exposing ceremony and monarch to just contempt.

A.D. 929 The last years of Charles the Simple were spent in captivity, Herbert of Vermandois, one of the feudal lords, having made successful war on him. He was murdered by his captor in the castle of Péronne.

Great disorders then prevailed, and almost constant civil war, between rival claimants of the crown. As it is utterly useless to follow all of these feuds, or to enumerate the several shadow-kings of this wretched period, I will merely say that the line of Charles the Great ended with Louis V., the Do-nothing.

At his death (987) the archbishop of Rheims consecrated Hugh Capet king. A majority of the nobles, clerical and lay, sanctioned the change, and thus a new dynasty was enthroned.

The people may possibly have, also, approved the change. We do not know. They were not consulted. All democratic principle had long been suppressed, and the right of the Church and of the nobles to select rulers of the people had been fully established in these darkest of the Dark Ages.

CHAPTER VII

THE CAPETIAN KINGS

HUGH CAPET; ROBERT THE WISE; PHILIP THE FAT; BEGINNING OF THE DARK AGES

HUGH CAPET'S reign did little more than keep alive the tradition of monarchy, as he was merely a powerful feudal chief among others of almost equal power. He exerted no general control, and the central authority was disregarded. His barons waged war upon each other constantly, made their own laws, coined their own money, and exercised the power of life and death over their subjects. A.D. 887 to 996

"Who made thee a count?" asked Hugh Capet of the Count of Périgord, when the nobleman claimed and exercised the right of levying war against a neighbouring lord.

"Who made thee a king?" was the insolent reply; and the war went on in defiance of royal authority.

It was a far cry from this state of things to that other extreme, in which Louis XIV., the descendant of Hugh, could truthfully say "The State? That is I." The one was the beginning; the other the end.

Pestilence raged among the people during Hugh's reign, and added its horrors to those of poverty, ignorance, superstition, and civil war. The end of the world was foretold, and the misery of the times was so great

that many looked forward with hope, rather than fear, to the fulfilment of the prophecy.

The king was a faithful slave of the priests, and he himself constantly wore the robes of his holy office as abbot of St. Martin of Tours.

On his death-bed, Hugh enjoined it upon his son, as the most important of all things, to guard the wealth of the abbeys, to court the favour of the priests, and to submit himself unreservedly to the Pope.

A.D. 1031 Robert the Wise, who had been crowned during his father's lifetime, succeeded him, and reigned for twenty-nine years. He was pious, benevolent, and prudent, watching over his kingdom with fatherly care, and doing his utmost to alleviate the sufferings of the times. He was not a great man, and his position was far from strong; on his own feudal domains he was lord, but he was not able to exercise control beyond them. No revenues came to him, excepting those of his own property; his laws, his judges, his authority, did not prevail in the territories of the other feudal chiefs. Consequently, we find the good King Robert living in a rather unkingly state: he composes hymns, chants in the choir, prays with fervour and perseverance, builds churches and convents, and feeds the poor.

In spite of his orthodox piety, he embroiled himself with the Pope. As a matter of fact, his meekness and devout servility gave the Pope such an opportunity to impose on it that the temptation was irresistible.

Hugh Capet had caused Robert to marry Bertha, widow of a Norman noble, a princess who held a claim to the kingdom of Burgundy. The match was beneficial to France, for it quieted Norman jealousies and secured

Burgundy. But Otho III., of Germany, alarmed at the extension of French influence, appealed to the Pope, and, upon the pretext that Bertha was distantly related to Robert, the Pope, Gregory V., commanded the king of France to repudiate his wife.

Robert seems to have loved Bertha, and though he was the humblest of men, he resented the papal interference.

Gregory launched against the loyal husband the anathema of Rome, pronounced him excommunicated, and laid France under an interdict.

Papal thunders were terrible things in those days, just as Druid interdicts had been in the days of the Druids; — just as the pagan prohibition from fire and water had meant isolation and death in the days of paganism. To the excommunicated, the world grew suddenly dark. A chill and a desolation fell upon him, and he was an outcast, shunned by all.

No Christian could eat, drink, or pray with him. He lost all social support, servants would not serve him, friends would not be seen with him, no door opened to his knock, no eye gazed upon him with pity or with love. The whole kingdom being under the interdict, no subject would honour the king; he was abhorred as though he were a leper and came crying "Unclean, unclean."

Divine service ceased; the sacraments could not be administered to the living, nor burial in consecrated ground given to the dead. The bells hung voiceless in the churches, the sweet face of the Madonna on the wall was covered from impious eyes; the images of the saints were taken down and laid upon beds of ashes and thorns. The very light of the sun seemed to grow dim to the

kingdom laid under the ban; people crept about, silently, with bent heads, and over all the sunny realm fell a shadow and a fear.

Such was the calamity which now appalled France — all because Robert had contracted a marriage which aroused a political jealousy of the Emperor of Germany, whose devoted friend the then Pope chanced to be.

The subjects of Robert knew only the facts, they did not know the motives. The masses rarely do. Published pretences are seldom the real motives; but the masses do not know it till long afterwards: and thus the time-worn game of political imposture is fresh from age to age.

Robert the Wise, forsaken by his friends, deserted by his servants, shunned by the very beggars his bounty had fed at his door, was driven into submission, and the loved and loving wife was put away.

Then the sun shone out again; loyal hearts warmed to the repentant king; servants reappeared, and so did the beggars who ate at the palace each day. The saints were lifted and the ashes carefully brushed off. The sweet face of the Madonna dropped its veil. The bells found their lost melody, and pealed forth a universal *Te Deum*.

Thank God! cried a great nation in one voice. The cloud has passed — from all but Bertha, the deserted wife. Her poor eyes will weep in some convent cell, and the world will soon forget. She was a queen, free from fault, a wife without sin, but the Pope — successor to the Christ who had lifted the Magdalen out of the dust — struck the light from her life, at the bidding of a German king.

Robert married again, and his new wife, Constance, brought vexation to him, and strife to the kingdom. She ruled king and kingdom, and did it badly. She inaugu-

rated religious feuds, by persecuting citizens accused of heresy. Twelve of these she caused to be condemned and burnt — the first thing of the kind that had yet happened among Christians.

One of the victims had been in former years her confessor. On the day of the execution, Constance stationed herself on the line of march of the condemned, and, as the old priest passed her, the wicked queen struck out one of his eyes with a stick.

This imperious woman stirred up civil war by inciting her sons to rebel against her husband, and the kingdom was rent by these feuds.

Robert the Wise was gathered to his fathers and was succeeded by his son Henry I. Again Constance caused civil war by the attempt to seize the crown for her younger son, Robert. A.D. 1031

The Duke of Normandy, Robert the Magnificent, came to the relief of the king and the rebellion was put down. Henry, however, gave to his brother the government of Burgundy, and thus secured peace.

Henry I. was succeeded by Philip. This king grew jealous of the power of the Norman dukes, and endeavoured to reduce it. William the Bastard, son of Robert the Magnificent, defeated his king at the battle of Mortemer, and was more powerful than ever — soon to be known as William the Conqueror, king of Great Britain. A.D. 1060

Philip was a scandalous person, and lived very much as he pleased, practising, as well as a Christian could, the pagan precepts, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

He had married Bertha, a princess of Holland, but he got tired of her, and closed her up in a convent. He then

took to wife Bertrade, Countess of Anjou, whose husband, Fulk the Morose, made a great noise about it — so much so, indeed, that the Pope commanded Philip to send the lady back to Fulk.

Philip refused, and for twelve years there was strife between him and the Pope.

A.D. 1094 In the year 1094, Philip was excommunicated; but he did not immediately yield, as Robert the Wise had done in a much juster cause. The royal resistance continued, and finally a compromise was reached.

The king came barefooted into an assembly of bishops, laid his hand upon the Gospels, and took an oath to have nothing further to do with his new wife, Bertrade.

The latter took a similar oath.

Then they continued to live together, just as they had done for twelve years, and no more was said about it. The Church was satisfied because it secured a formal submission. The king was satisfied because he retained the woman.

The queerest part of the whole proceeding, illustrating vividly the morals of the times, is that Bertrade brought about friendly relations between both her husbands, and was herself on substantially the same terms with both.

Philip got very much ashamed of his sins, after he had lost the power to enjoy them, and gave the feeble remnant of his life to repentance.

A.D. 1108 Philip was succeeded by his son, Louis the Fat. This was in the year 1108.

The long period of time stretching from the death of Charlemagne to the reign of Louis the Fat is known in history as the Dark Ages. They are so called because anarchy prevailed — anarchy in which men groped in

mental darkness, and fell back into lawlessness, disorganization, superstition, and crime. It was a period in which robbers infested highways, assassins lurked at street corners, barons fought barons, princes warred over the succession, agriculture shrunk to the narrowest limits, and pestilence and famine wasted the war-worn land.

It was a time when there were no schools for the laity, no books for them, no elevating instruction of any kind. There was a great university at Paris, but it was mainly scientific and theological. Scholars, trained therein, came forth to talk to one another about Aristotle and Plato; or about predestination, free will, and transubstantiation. For the masses of the people, literary entertainment was not such as to edify. They were told of miracles and enchantments; of dragons and magicians; of wicked giants slain by Christian knights in spite of the most painful discrepancies of size and strength. The lives of saints and martyrs, overlaid with monstrous and sacrilegious extravagances, formed the most popular narratives of the time; and the history of such men as Charlemagne, Clovis, and Constantine assumed all the fabulous glory that imaginative monks, of limited creative faculties, could invent. Divine aid, given by word and deed and sign, was theirs whenever needed; and the curtains of hell were constantly being rolled back to exhibit to the gaping multitude the sight of the eternal torments of those who had displeased the Church.

Witches were believed in, and spells, sorceries, miracles, and prophecies. In the "Chronicle of Turpin," the people were told that Charlemagne invaded Spain at the direct instance of James, the brother of John the

Evangelist; and that the walls of Pamplona, resisting carnal weapons, fell at once when prayers were offered. Fenacute, the giant, makes a vain attempt to stay the progress of orthodox arms. He is a pagan, with the strength of forty men, his total height twenty cubits or about thirty feet. Twenty men were sent against this monster, by Charlemagne; but Fenacute took them up under his arms and carried them off home with him. Charlemagne is astonished. The entire Christian army is astonished. But Orlando, or Roland, comes to the rescue, challenges Fenacute, and in the midst of the fight assails him with a proposition in theology. The foolish giant quits fighting, and tries to unravel Orlando's argument. Being a mere pagan, he of course is unequal to the task, and while he is in this state of mental helplessness Roland slays him.

Thus everything went well with kings who were orthodox. With heretical kings, times were sorrowful. Horrid sea-monsters would sometimes devour them, and, at others, blood would rain for three days at a stretch in their dominions. Their wives gave birth to monsters, their lives were full of terrors, and their souls sank into a flaming hell.

The pagan and savage conception of Deity prevailed. The infinitely pure and lofty religion of Christ Jesus was degraded. The idea that money could buy forgiveness of sins corrupted society to the core. No such idea lives in the teaching of our Saviour. It came from older and grosser religions.

Just as paganism defiled Christianity with heathen rites and ceremonies, so it degraded it by the superstition that sin could be paid off with money or land or chattels.

To this doctrine, let loose in a lawless period, is due much of the crime which stained the record of the Dark Ages.

Eligius, an orthodox writer and saint of the seventh century, mentions the several virtues which should distinguish a Christian, and adds: —

"He is a good Christian who comes frequently to church; who presents gifts that may be presented to God; who does not taste the fruits of the land till he has consecrated a part of them to God; who can repeat the Creed, or the Lord's Prayer. Redeem your souls from punishment, offer presents and tithes to the Church; light candles in holy places, implore the protection of the saints; for if you do these things you may come with safety to the day of judgment and say, 'Give unto us, Lord, for we have given unto thee.'"

This was religion's central thought in the Dark Ages — "Give to the Lord," meaning the priests, "and the Lord will pay you back in the day of judgment."

The clergy had constantly preached that the world was coming to an end in the year 1000. Consequently when the year 900 was passed, the minds of men became fixed upon the awful event which was so confidently predicted. As the century waned and the fatal year 1000 grew nearer, the fountains of the great deep of human society were broken up. People grew timid and alarmed. They could see dreadful signs in the heavens. Wherever they looked, their frightened senses perceived evidences of the world's death. The churches were crowded with eager worshippers, confessing their sins and doing penance. Many of the terror-stricken landowners gave up all they possessed to the Church, and hurried away on pious pil-

grimages to Jerusalem. The crops were not even planted, for the people thought no one would be alive next year to reap them. When the dreadful year 1000 had passed, men breathed again with the unspeakable joy of a new lease of life. They were so delighted that instead of reclaiming the property already bestowed on the Church, the donations became more splendid than ever.

As a companion piece of the ignorance and superstition just described, the historians tell us of an instance when two great armies were on the march to meet each other on the battle-field, and an eclipse of the sun occurred. The whole multitude of warriors were so completely demoralized that the armies disbanded.

Famine, war, and pestilence were making such havoc in the land that the Church and the king united on the following remarkable reform: —

A.D. 1035 "The Truce of God" was solemnly proclaimed by the Pope, and supported by the state authorities. By its terms all fighting from Wednesday evening to Monday morning was to cease. It was also enjoined that the crimes against women should cease; that labourers in the fields must not be attacked and must not be robbed or beaten or carried off to the wars, as had been customary up to that time.

How much "The Truce of God" was observed, it is hard to say; but it is a tremendous proof of the wildness of the times that the attempt to stay the hand of murder and rapine half the week was considered the best that could be hoped.

In several of the counties of Normandy, the peasants, maddened by oppression, rose in masses, and elected delegates to meet at some central point and frame better laws. The feudal chief, Duke Richard, sent his soldiers promptly

against these unfortunate men and dispersed them. The deputies whom they had elected were arrested, their feet and hands were cut off, and thus mutilated, they were sent home as an object lesson to their comrades. The peasants gave up their design and returned to their ploughs.

An honest writer many years afterwards gave the following statement of their grievances: "The lords," said they, "do us naught but ill. With them we have neither gain nor profit for our labours. Every day is, for us, a day of suffering, of toil and weariness. Every day we have our cattle taken from us for road work and forced service. We have plaints and grievances, old and new exactions, pleas and processes without end,— money pleas, market pleas, road pleas, forest pleas, mill pleas, blackmail pleas, watch-and-ward pleas. There are so many provosts, bailiffs, and sergeants that we have not one hour's peace. Day by day they run us down, seize our movables, and drive us from our lands. There is no security for us against the lords. Why suffer we all this evil? Are we not men even as they are?"

Such were the grievances 900 years ago. "Why suffer these evils? Are we not men even as they are?"

Strangely familiar are these questions; strangely familiar those grievances.

Assembling themselves together in peaceful fashion those oppressed peasants had stated their complaints, and had chosen delegates to represent them. This was a very high crime — thought the nobles.

Down comes the mailed hand of the feudal lord on the uncovered rustic head. "Get you back to your kennels, dogs that you are!"

So orders the man clad in steel armour, having sword

in hand. The other man — equally the son of Adam and of God — must needs obey, for he has naught round his body but rags, and in his clumsy, toil-stiffened hands is naught but a club, or a stone.

So they go back to their ploughs. All but the delegates. They plough no more henceforth and forever. Let the stricken wife and daughter bring strips of coarse cloth, and bind up the bleeding stumps of arms and legs, as best they may. Those men will plough no more.

They wanted justice. They asked for the right to live on some terms that made existence tolerable. They dared to dream of drawing the line between themselves and the dumb, soulless cattle. They sought to lay their faltering hands upon the sacred vessel of the brotherhood and equality of man.

Such were their crimes.

And in sight of the castle and in the shadow of the Church, the hands and feet were stricken away from the quivering bodies; and the maimed wretches, screaming with pain, and moistening the highway with their blood, were driven back to their hovels, to illustrate, in a way the dullest serf could understand, the dangers of protesting against established wrongs.

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CHAPTER VIII

FEUDALISM

WE must bear in mind that the condition of the world underwent radical changes at the fall of the Roman Empire. In almost every country of Europe the original inhabitants were forced to submit to newcomers. Northern tribes poured down upon Italy, Spain, France, England, and Germany. These invasions seemed to come from Germany, at first, but afterwards there were inundations of tribes from still further north. Slavs, Bulgarians, Avars, Huns, Magyars, and Scythians pushed down upon Germany itself, displacing or absorbing native tribes.

Out of this state of things, a military system naturally arose, its primary object being one of self-defence. The conquerors meant to hold what they had taken — to hold it against conquered natives and against foreign assailants.

The plan they adopted is known as the Feudal System. In its original simplicity, it meant no more than that the man who held a part of the conquered land bound himself to help defend the whole of it. All were to unite to defend each part, and the owner of each part was to be ready to fight for all.

The leader, or king, of the conquering tribe naturally claimed a large share of the conquered land. Out of this territory he carved many large estates, giving them to his

leudes, or other favourites, to be enjoyed at his pleasure. In return they were to come to his aid, if any part of the territory were threatened.

The nobles to whom the king granted lands, or fiefs, or feuds, would, in their turn, grant parcels of them to their own friends and followers, upon the like condition of rendering military service in time of need.

This was the embryo of that vast military establishment which we call the feudal system.

The theory on which it based the tenure of land was that God owned the soil, and under Him, the king, who, by a legal fiction, could do what he liked with it, every tenant holding directly or indirectly from him.

The feudal tenant therefore had no title to his land, at first; he only had the use of it, the right to occupy it as long as his lord was willing.

Between the feudal tenant and his lord, vassalage existed; that is, there was a personal bond between the two conveying the idea of social inequality, and of services to be rendered by the tenant.

The political relation between lord and vassal is expressed in the word immunity. As long as the tenancy continued, the vassal was free from his lord's interference. In his own domains, he acted the king, and no law made by his king, and no new burden put upon him, bound him without his consent.

These were the vital principles of feudalism. It was a clumsy military confederacy. The king was the central government, the chiefs were the separate states. In theory, then, the king, in national affairs, controlled all the chiefs; in local affairs, each chief exercised the right of self-government.

It will be seen at a glance how inevitable it was that there should be strife between the central and the local authority. There was no constitution defining the limits of power on the one side or the other. There was no tribunal which could arbitrate differences between the states and the general government.

Hence under weak kings, the central power was null; under strong kings, the states were null. For ages these two principles antagonized each other; and finally the central authority won — just as it did in the United States of America. In France, as in America, it took "blood and iron" to settle the question.

At first, the chiefs held their lands at the pleasure of the king. Under Charlemagne this was universally the case, but under his weak successors the lords encroached upon the crown, and the lands became hereditary.

The feudal estates had not embraced all the lands in the kingdom at the beginning. Much of the soil remained with the original owners, and was free from feudal dues. These were called allodial estates. But as the disorders of the times increased, it became necessary for every land-owner to have some powerful protector, and therefore the holders of these allodial lands gave them up to the feudal chiefs, on promise of protection. In this manner were extinguished all the allodial estates in France.

By natural evolution, the burdens of the feudal system increased.

If the chief was taken prisoner in war, the vassal was forced to help pay his ransom. When the lord's daughter married, or his eldest son became a knight, it was the vassal's duty to contribute to the expense. If the chief himself wished to make pilgrimage to Palestine, the

vassal was asked to help pay for the journey. The heir of the vassal could not take possession of the inheritance till he had paid the lord for the privilege. The vassal could not sell the land without paying the lord a fine equal to one year's rent. If the vassal died without an heir, the land went back to the lord. If he died leaving a minor child, the lord took possession of the child and the land, and collected the rents for his own use until the heir reached majority. Female wards had to marry husbands chosen by the lord, or pay a heavy fine for their disobedience. Rents degenerated from the military service of forty days each year, into payments in produce, money, and labour. Going a step further, the lords claimed the right to monopolize the grinding of grain, the making of wine, the baking of bread in ovens, and the tenant had to pay tolls all along the line. The lord exercised the right of seizing the tenant's produce and paying a price fixed by himself. The tenant had to work the fields of his lord, gather the crop, make his wine, haul his wood, repair his castle, the roads, and the bridges; and besides many other burdens, he had to feed the lord and his train when they were travelling through the tenant's district, and to furnish horses and wagons to transport them.

Each of these feudal chiefs, living in a fortified castle, and exercising royal powers over his own domains, coined money, held courts, executed criminals, and waged private war. They were proud, fearless, and cruel. They could not write, few of them could read, they were so ignorant that they put blind faith in fables which the children of our day would scorn. But their sense of personal importance was gigantic, and they were ready at all

times to maintain honour with life. A noble could not exercise any trade without losing caste. Nor could he marry out of his class. If he broke this unwritten law, he was despised by his peers, and his children considered no better than bastards.

Below the chiefs came the freemen and the serfs. The former were soldiers, clericals, citizens of the chartered towns, or farmers who were living under protection of the lords.

The vast majority of the people were serfs. They were "bound to the soil," and when an estate changed masters they went with the land. They could not leave the estate without the chief's permission, nor could they be made to leave it.

These serfs were those who were descended from the slaves of old times; or they were Gauls reduced by the Franks; or they were serfs by voluntary agreement. So great was the poverty of the lower orders that many surrendered their freedom for mere food — to keep from starving. In seasons of famine great numbers of freemen would sell themselves for bread. The Greek merchants made a regular business of buying these famishing wretches, and selling them to the Saracens. It was considered a humane law when Charles the Bald enacted that a citizen, who had sold himself into slavery to get food to eat, should have the privilege of redeeming himself at a fair price.

If the king got into a feud with one of his brothers, or with a neighbouring ruler, and desired to wage war upon him, he could call upon all his subjects to quit work and come into his army to do his fighting. If any poor devil failed to respond to this invitation, he was condemned to perpetual servitude.

There was still another way in which free men became serfs. Infatuated citizens, burning with religious zeal, would surrender their freedom to the Church and agree to work the lands of the priests, as slaves, in return for the promise that the priests would pray for them.

What can we say of an age when superstition and ignorance were so great the citizen had no faith in his own prayers, but was willing to toil all his life to obtain the prayers of some one else?

And what can we say of the perversion of the clerical power which accepted such a pitiable sacrifice?

Many of the popes strongly condemned slavery, but the clergy kept their serfs. When emancipation set in, at a later date, the slaves of the Church were among the last to obtain their freedom.

It is a fact not generally known that servitude was not abolished in all parts of France till the Revolution of 1789.

During these Dark Ages the wealthy nobles, as before stated, lived in great gloomy castles, built of stone, looking more like a modern jail than like a palace. Narrow windows let in light and air, and they were crossed by iron bars to keep out the stealthy assassin. No window glass had yet come into use.

The grandee spent most of his time in hunting, or in fighting, or in feasting. They were coarse, barbarous men, brave as lions, and densely ignorant. Rarely could a book be found in any of these castles. Perhaps I should say manuscript, for books, as we know them, were not yet printed. Even if such a work were to be found, perhaps no one in the castle could read it, unless it was the priest.

When these aristocrats were under the necessity of signing papers of any sort, which was seldom, they did so with a seal, or with the point of their swords.

If such rude manners prevailed among the nobility, we can imagine how completely wretched must have been the lot of the common people, the serfs, who were bound to the soil, and who were regarded by their masters as so many cattle.

Their houses were mean huts of one room without the comfort or convenience which is now given to a cow-stall, or a horse-stable. Year in and year out, they toiled and suffered, without a ray of light in their squalid lives, or a glimpse of genuine knowledge in their shrivelled, timorous, and priest-ridden minds. In person, they were slaves; and whatever their labour produced, was divided between the castle and the Church.

Possibly these miserable peasants welcomed the chance to go to the wars, and fight out questions they did not raise or comprehend; their lives were so utterly dreary and pitiable that the freedom of the march and the stern joy of the battle were perhaps agreeable diversions. Even if they got killed, what did they lose? Simply a few years of monotonous drudgery.

As a matter of course, commerce was almost at a standstill. There was very little money, and very little security for traffic. Each noble had the right to coin money, but few of them coined much; and there being so many different stamps on the pieces, general confidence in the currency was lacking.

Most of the gold and silver was kept in bulk, not coined, and was weighed when used, like wheat and corn.

The destruction of cities in war, the plundering expe-

ditions of the pirates and the robbers, and the fierce invasion of barbarian tribes, caused immense quantities of gold and silver to be destroyed, or lost, or hidden away.

Whether these causes be the true ones or not, it is a historical truth that the centuries of ignorance, bloodshed, and superstition, called the Dark Ages, were those wherein there was no established national currency to stimulate production, exchange commodities, bring conservatism to the property-owner, and to introduce some comfort and refinement to the home even of the common labourer.

In fact, most of the gold and silver had been lost to Europe; — and there can be no progress and continuous refinement without money of some sort.

In the decline of the Roman Empire, when wild extravagance was the order of the day, a great part of her gold and silver had gone to India to pay for luxuries. India bought nothing from Rome, and hence that money never returned.

The feudal system created the castle, and life in the castle illustrates every phase of the system.

When the Romans began to fall back before the barbarians, they did so very slowly, fighting as they retreated. To hold their frontier lines against these sudden assaults of disorderly mobs of barbarians, the Romans, in addition to their usual camp-defences of ditches and palisades, threw up a tower within the intrenched camp. This tower, with ramparts and trench around it, is supposed to be the germ of the castle. Great numbers of these towers marked the gradual retreat of the Roman legions.

In course of time the tower of the Romans became the

huge donjon-keep of the feudal lord. Its walls, immensely thick, and pierced here and there by narrow, grated windows, sprang up to the height of 100 or even 200 feet, and from the roof, or turret, flew the flag of the chief. This donjon was the citadel of the feudal fortress; it was the final magazine of provisions and arms; the great well or cistern was always under it; it was the last hope in case of siege; the desperate, final struggle was here.

This donjon being the nucleus, other features of the system rapidly developed. Not only were other towers added, on the different sides of the enclosure, but buildings were erected more suitable for living-purposes. Then, also, the church arose, and the chapel; the various necessary houses for servants, cattle, horses, and stores.

All this mass of buildings was enclosed by a huge stone wall, very thick and very high. Along these battlements the watchman tramped, day and night, summer and winter, keeping a lookout for enemies. These battlements were exposed to the extremes of the weather, and the warder was sometimes frozen at his post of duty. But eventually, galleries ran along the ramparts, sheltering the watchmen, and adding to the security of the defenders in time of siege.

Round this inner square, and cutting it off from all communication with the outer world, was not only the guarded wall, but a wide and deep canal, filled with water,—the moat. The enemy, in storming the castle, could make no headway till this moat was filled. Therefore the filling of the moat was desperately attempted, and as desperately resisted.

From the castle to the outer court, one passed over the moat by a drawbridge, which was raised and lowered by

chains. With the drawbridge up, the castle was on a fortified island; with it down, it was connected with the outer court.

This outer court usually covered many acres. It was also defended by walls of stone and massive gates. Here the vassals connected with the castle lived. Here the lord's grain was ground in his mill; bread baked in his oven; grapes pressed in his wine-press; horses shod in his smithy; carts made by his wheelwrights; cloth woven in his looms. This outer court was the hive of industry of the castle; and this huddle of buildings, crouching close to the donjon-keep for protection, became the nucleus of town and city.

Country life, as we now have it, was hardly known. For safety, one had to seek shelter in the convent or the castle.

Every day the vassals went forth to toil in the fields; and the cattle were sent to pasture in the swamps. At night cattle and vassals came back to shelter.

Here, then, we have a fine idea of the working of the feudal system. This lord of the castle is a knight, his castle a petty kingdom. He fortifies it, for he is in danger of constant attack. He gathers his vassals about him, because he needs them, and they need him. It is his duty to drive away any one who molests them; it is their duty to help him do it. He owes them protection; they owe him support. The chief lives no life of ease: he must be ready, at all hours, to mount steed and fly to the defence of his little state. Horses stand ready saddled in the stalls; knights, armed from head to heel, are ready to ride at sound of trump. Let but the watchman on the wall blow the note of alarm, and the castle hums

with instant activity and resounds with the rattle and clang of arms and armour.

The chief's word is law. He declares war, and makes peace. Sometimes he fights for the king; sometimes for himself. Let but a neighbouring chief offend him by act, or word, or look, and there will be copious shedding of blood.

The chief is frequently short of money; tournaments are most expensive; so are weddings, and so are unlimited liberalities to the Church and to the poor. Therefore the chief coins money: coins it out of gold, when he has any; out of silver, when he can; and out of leather, when he must. To insure the circulation of his own currency, the chief prohibits all others in his little state, even that of the king. At other times, the chief will coin his money out of hapless merchants, who may chance to pass his way. He will swoop down upon these men of peace, and strip them to the very skin.

The chief is the supreme court of his dominions. He allows no lawyers, no written pleadings. They would bother him; to hear both sides would confuse his mind. Besides, he would go to sleep pending the reading of authorities. Being simple, and lacking in mental nimbleness, he would not know what to do with conflicting decisions, each of equal dignity. Therefore the chief preserves his equilibrium by dispensing with lawyers and pleadings. He holds court outside his castle, or in its great hall. He asks just what questions he pleases, his purpose being to get at the truth. If the accused wants to criminate himself, there is no constitutional objection to his doing so. There being no rational excuse for *not* asking the supposed criminal all about it, the chief asks

him. No sane man can give a good reason to the contrary.

When the chief has satisfied himself, judgment is pronounced then and there: no appeal can be had, no motions for new trial, no bills of exceptions, no motions in arrest of judgment. The case is settled for all time.

In civil matters, especially, the contentions between vassal and vassal may be tried by jury. Criminal cases are also tried in that way, sometimes; but the chief is the law-lord, as well as the war-lord, and things usually go as he wants them.

Under the donjon, as the name implies, there are dungeons,— oh, how damp, and dark, and cold! Into these dungeons goes many a poor wretch, never to look upon stream, or sky, or human face again. Many a vassal rots here among beetles and toads, because he has angered his lord. Many a serf starves like a dog in these underground vaults, because he would not yield money, or cattle, or son, or daughter, at the behest of the chief.

Darkness, cold, and slimy moisture are not the only terrors of these castle depths. There are iron wheels, jagged with bristling iron teeth. On these wheels prisoners will be strapped, and gaolers will beat the naked bodies of the victims against the iron teeth, until death is sweet relief from horrible pain.

There are knee-clamps, also, for the crushing of the knees; iron boots for the crushing of the feet; thumb-screws for the crushing of the thumbs; iron rods for the jabbing out of eyes! Great heaven! How have the lightnings of divine wrath been held back all these bloody years!

Not much comfort, as we understand the term, could

have been possible in the wall-girdled, grimly frowning castles. There was too much anxiety; too little security; too much bang and battle; too little rest and peace.

The visitor to the castle halted at a distance and blew a horn: if he came too near without leave, he stood in imminent peril of being skewered with an arrow from the watchman on the wall. If such a visitor satisfied the watchman that he was on friendly mission bent, he was allowed to approach the gate, where there was a long sheet of brass, and a hammer. With this hammer he could beat upon the brass plate. This was the beginning of our knockers, door-bells, and similar nuisances.

The porter answered the noise made by the hammer, and if the master within gave permission, the visitor could then enter the castle, coming across the moat on the drawbridge, through the portcullis arch, and through several other gates, too numerous to mention.

If on horseback, the visitor would dismount in the courtyard, and pages would carry his horse to the stables, while other pages would usher the visitor himself into the presence of lord or lady.

Within the castle conveniences of life are few. There are tables, chairs, beds, silver or pewter or wooden plates, and cups, knives, and spoons; there are no forks. The rooms are lighted with long wax candles. The kitchen is, perhaps, 100 yards from the dining-room. There is plenty to eat and plenty to drink; but none of those many comforts which are now to be found in the home of any industrious farmer, mechanic, or day-labourer. The chimney was invented toward the twelfth century, and there were fireplaces, with hooded mantels, where huge logs brightly blazed, and round which the

family circle gathered. Window glass came in later. In all these castles the lavatory was as much a matter of course as the hall and the gateway. The washing-room was always there, with jets of water emptying into bowls, and towels to wipe with, also. People ate with their fingers, like the Turks; hence each man had a keen interest in the hands of his neighbours, and was bound to see to it that he came to table clean. Then, again, the clear-water moat made bathing convenient. Marble bath-tubs were unknown, it is true, but in the basement of the castle were stone troughs and wooden tubs, filled from the moat, and the inmates of the castle had almost a passion for the bath.

We find the rudest of the kings of feudal France delighting in the water. Clotaire I. was often to be seen, stark-naked, swimming and frolicking in the river, surrounded by his naked companions in arms, his leudes.

The floors of the castle were of brick, sometimes covered with rushes, straw, or the skins of wild animals. The walls were often covered with tapestries, woven by the ladies of the family, and representing scenes from history, romance, or Scripture.

Sometimes the walls of the chambers would be painted with pictures, either allegorical, or representing natural objects. To have such a painted chamber was the pet fancy of lord and lady. The beds were immense affairs, with mattress upon mattress; the coverlet was sometimes of silk, frequently embroidered in gold. Night-clothes were unknown, and each man and woman went to bed quite naked.

In the chamber of the chief and his wife, a wax candle burns all night; for he never knows when he will have to

get up out of bed and go forth to kill somebody — or to be killed himself.

This fortress is another oasis in the desert of disorder. Here the weak find shelter and safety; the poor alms; the foe defiance and fight.

Very haughty this chief may be to his vassals; many an outrage he may perpetrate on serf and freeman, on the poor man's son, on the poor man's daughter. But he will not allow other chiefs like action. Not a hair of the head of any slave in all his domain may any other prince touch, without accounting to this lord for it. He exacts obedience, harshly, excessively, but protection he has promised, and will give. His own pride is involved — likewise his interest.

This is known throughout the land; therefore in times of peace marauders dare not molest his vassals. The castle, then, is also a city of refuge in a distracted land.

In these castles the monk prays, or teaches; the troubadour sings of lovers true and maidens fair; the children make their stony galleries ring with the merriment of youthful games; the soldier, resting in their hospitality, talks of his battles and fights them over again. In the great hall hang trophies of many a chase, many a fight. The antlers of the stag, the tusks of the boar, the hide of the bear, the horns of the bull, may all be seen there, and around each gathers a story. Pennons taken in battle, armour and weapons, — all hang along the walls, and speak of warlike deeds.

In this great hall the vassals feast with the lord, and take the oath of allegiance. Here the Christmas revels are held, with mirth loud and long; here the marriage train passes, in happy state; here the funeral dirge rises

and echoes along the lofty corridors — for life is but life, wheresoever men live it.

The troubadour is the poet of the Middle Ages, the musician of the feudal system. In his romance the warrior hopes to live; in his song beauty believes it will never fade. He is the loved of lords and of ladies, for in his songs of brave men and fair women throb the highest emotions of both. He is the literary rebel of his times, and priests look but sourly upon him; for he sings of wine, woman, love, fame, and pleasure, when the monk would fain have all writing and singing confined to homilies and hymns, to accounts of miracles, and marvellous stories of saints.

Out of those grim castle gates the train of gallant knights will ride to battle, lances poised, spur on heel, plume on crest. Watched anxiously from the battlements, they will be seen on the return, bringing captured banners, spoils of war, or rival chief in bonds. Or, it may be, anxious watchers will *not* see the knights return; but will see the breathless messenger instead, the bearer of evil tidings, all covered with dust and blood, and telling with broken voice of battle lost, of riderless steeds, of gallant warriors dead on distant field — and the castle will ring with the woe that was heard of old in Ramah.

From these battlements the crusader will be watched as he rides away to the Holy Land. Tear-dimmed eyes will follow his fading figure till it is lost in the distance. From these walls he will be seen as he painfully plods homeward again, sore in body and in mind. Or, it may be, he goes forth not to return, and strained eyes will look eastward for a pilgrim who comes no more.

In this vast courtyard, or out on the plain beyond

these walls, the tournament will be held. Mail-clad knights will meet in the arena, and shiver lances under the eyes of fair ladies. Or brilliant cavalcades will go hence on sunny days to hawk in the fields, or to chase the stag in the forest, or to bait the fierce wild boar in the woods. In these days the hunter benefits the people; he slays the too numerous wild animals which destroy the crops.

Whatever of splendour there is in all France, is here in the castle, or at the monastery. There is none in the hut. No honour is paid to labour, and no reward. To fight is the one crying need of the system, and all honours go to the men who fight. The serf must work, and furnish food for all; and he must be content to look upward in humble obedience to his master. He must drudge for my lord of the castle; must cut wood, draw water, clean stables, till the fields, harvest the crop. If he fail of any duty, he will be beaten with many stripes. Perchance in a fit of spleen my lord may buffet him with iron-gloved hand, so that he dies: in that event he is dead, and that's all.

Round this castle enemies may gather in battle array. The storm of war then beats about the walls. The castle will be attacked and defended, as walled cities are. There will be assaults, and there will be sallies, mines and counter-mines, pitfalls and surprises, shouts of the living, and groans of the dying.

Before these gates will be acted, in all fulness, the red drama of war; and the issue will be watched with blanched cheeks by wives and daughters, dwelling here in the castle. If the enemy be routed, the castle forces will pursue, will slaughter, will take bloody revenge, — and the troubadour will make a song about it.

If the castle be too weak to resist, then God defend us! — for the marauders will feel no pity. In a great rush of trampling feet, amid curses and groans and clash of arms, the foe will dash in, sword and torch in hand. The vassal will die where he stands. The chief will fall like the lion at bay. The fire will burst forth and roar through all the galleries. Screaming women will be slain, or worse. Looted from top to bottom, the castle is roaring like a vast furnace. The victors go their way savagely exultant. With a mighty crash, the roofs and floors fall in, and a grim pile of smoking ruins is left — ruins which all Europe even yet preserves, with a certain veneration, as relics of a system which served its purpose, and then passed away.

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CHAPTER IX

THE CRUSADES

"GOD wills it! God wills it!"

Such was the battle-cry which rose from the plains of Clermont in November, 1095, as the assembled hosts of Christians heard the call of the Church for volunteers to rescue the sepulchre of Christ. A.D. 1095

The spot where our Saviour rested had been profaned by infidel feet. The pilgrims who journeyed to Palestine had been subjected to insult and to outrage. A poor priest, burning with resentment at the cruelties he had witnessed, had returned to Europe, and, with the sanction of the Pope, had gone from village to village, from city to city, kindling the fires of religious enthusiasm. Unattractive in person, unskilled in learning, ragged in apparel, there was nothing in his appearance which could promise the wonders he worked. But the gift of eloquence was his, and to him came the power which so mysteriously belongs to intense zeal when wedded to intense purpose. To such men, whether they be high or low, whether learned or unlearned, it has pleased God to yield marvellous influence, in moulding the thoughts of men and changing the destinies of nations.

Peter the Hermit was nothing but an humble priest, without silver or gold, houses or lands or office. Yet he stormed with fiery pleadings, both the castle and the

church, the king and the people. No rank was too high, none was too low — the spell of his eloquence fell upon all ranks alike, shaming the haughty noble into purer thoughts, and lifting the lowly peasant to higher hopes.

Therefore, when the Church summoned the grand Council of Clermont in 1095, there was such a gathering as no Pope had ever seen. Thirteen archbishops, and two hundred and five bishops, or abbots, were met by so many princes, and so many feudal lords, and so many of the common people, that the towns and villages of the neighbourhood were crowded, and every field and meadow was dotted with tents.

On a platform, built upon the plains, Pope Urban II., arrayed in all the splendour of the pontifical robes, took position, accompanied by Peter the Hermit, who was dressed as a simple pilgrim. The great throng of princes and prelates, of nobles and of serfs, stood on every side of the platform — intensely concerned in the words to be spoken.

Peter was the first to speak. He told the story of his journey to Palestine, of his visit to Jerusalem. He pictured the miseries and the humiliations of the Christians there. He described the insults he had himself suffered, and the tortures he had seen inflicted upon others. As he spoke, men forgot his squalid appearance. The fires of his zeal and purpose caught up the gathered fuel his audience furnished, and lit it as the spark lights the magazine. From one boundary of the throng to the other the feeling was the same, and the glory of human speech had reached its divinest end — it had planted the same thought in the mind of the master and the slave, of the

noble and the serf, of the rich and the poor, of the learned and the unlearned. It had swept away the barriers of caste and pride, of dress and manners, of interest and of occupation. For the time, all, all, were alike — the children of God, tossed by the same tempest of feeling, driven by the same torrent of purpose.

So, when the Pope, representing all that was most sacred in their eyes, and speaking for Him whose tomb and whose disciples had been insulted, uttered the call to action, the multitude in response was as the sound of the sea.

"Take ye, then, the road to Jerusalem," cried the pontiff.

"God wills it! God wills it!" cried the people.

The plans for the crusade were matured, the badge to be worn chosen, the time for setting out appointed.

Then the Council of Clermont was ended, its name to be remembered ever after as one of those assemblies which change the march of the world.

For centuries the East had been invading the West. In huge armies the followers of Mohammed had swept over Greece and Germany and Spain, making war upon the followers of Christ.

At the battle of Tours they had been met and decisively thrown back by Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne. Subsequently they had been driven still further until they had ceased to be a danger to Europe.

Now, however, the order of invasion was to be reversed. For two hundred years the West was to assail the East. Christians were to invade Mohammedans.

This was not by any means the most important of the changes the crusades were to bring. It was to cause

much alteration in the social and political status. The feudal lords, in making the preparations for the holy war suitable to their rank, found it necessary to obtain supplies of money. To do so, they were sometimes compelled to encumber their estates, or even to sell portions thereof. Many a town, oppressed by its feudal chieftain, bought liberal charters at this time, which placed the city government in the hands of its own citizens.

Another feature of such a general movement was that it tended to lessen the differences between the classes. Inasmuch as all were taking part in the same grand enterprise, a certain sense of equality, of brotherhood, was necessarily created.

To encourage volunteers, certain special privileges were granted. No debt was to bear interest while the debtor was away on the crusade; taxes were suspended; no suit could be brought for debt while the debtor was bearing the cross; the crusader was placed under the protection of the Church, his penances remitted, his sins forgiven, and his eternal salvation assured.

A.D. 1096 The Council of Clermont had fixed August, 1096, as the time for departure of the crusaders for the Holy Land; but the impatience of the people was so great that on March 8, 1096, three multitudes, numbering more than 100,000 people, set out. Men, women, and children even, left home and fireside for this pious pilgrimage. Their progress was disorderly and their sufferings soon became intolerable. Having made no sufficient preparations for such a journey, having cast themselves upon the road with the idea that they would be miraculously fed, their wants soon reminded them that, after all, enthusiasm must not cut loose entirely from common sense.

Driven by hunger, they began to pillage the towns through which they passed. In vain did their leaders, one of whom was Peter the Hermit, endeavour to keep them in bounds. So great became their ravages upon the Hungarians and the Bulgarians, that these people rose in arms against the lawless pilgrims and almost exterminated them. Only a remnant of the 100,000 reached Constantinople and landed on the shores of Asia. With the exception of Peter and a few others, the Saracens destroyed them utterly.

Following this disorderly mob came the real strength of the crusaders. A magnificent army, raised in France and Italy, commanded by the most renowned feudal chieftains of the age, and numbering more than 600,000 men, was put in motion in Europe, reached Asia in splendid condition, and commenced the campaign with military system. Many a brilliant reputation was made on this romantic march. The chivalry of Europe found a field which excited its valour to the noblest pitch. Clad in steel armour from head to foot, borne into battle on magnificent steeds, fighting under banners which had been woven by some fair woman's hand and blessed in some church, these knights, cold and proud and cruel as they sometimes could be at home, were among the bravest men who ever courted death as the price of glory. The light troops of the East were no match for them. On every plain they fought and won. At every hostile city they knocked and entered — knocked with the battle-axe and entered, lance in rest. Nice in Bithynia fell before them; so did Antioch, and all the surrounding cities. In the spring of the year 1099 the crusaders came in sight of Jerusalem itself. In July of the same year they captured it.

Peter the Hermit was present, and thus had the rare joy of entering triumphantly, with a victorious army, the city his eloquence had sought to redeem.

It is painful to dwell on the horrible massacre with which the crusaders disgraced their success. Seventy thousand of the citizens of Jerusalem were slain, after the city had surrendered and all resistance had ceased. And to make the matter worse, this atrocity was committed after the pilgrims had gone in penitential procession, barefooted, to the holy sepulchre of the Prince of Peace — the Teacher of good will to men.

It is likewise painful to know how much greed and rapacity were shown by the leaders of the crusade; to know the jealousies which divided the army into furious factions; to know that each leader seemed bent merely on filling his own pockets with gold or carving out for himself, from the conquered territory, a principality over which he might rule.

Above the heads of these meaner spirits, however, tower men like Godfrey and Tancred — men who are favourites with history and with romance, in poetry and in song.

A government for Jerusalem was established, with Godfrey at its head, and most of the surviving crusaders returned home. Few of them ever saw native land again.

Peter the Hermit, coming back to Europe, lived in retirement in France near Huy, where he founded a monastery. He died on the 11th of July, 1115.

The Christian government thus set up in Palestine and Syria had to struggle for existence from the beginning. The Europeans, being so far from their source

of reinforcements, gradually lost ground. One city after another fell back into the hands of the Mohammedans. A.D. In the year 1187 the celebrated Saladin retook Jerusalem 1187 itself, and thus ended the Christian rule.

Only seven years later, Richard of the Lion Heart, king of England, vainly performed wonders of courage in the effort to recover the lost ground. The task was too great. He advanced his victorious army within sight of Jerusalem, but was compelled to retreat in despair, "covering his eyes with his hands and saying he was not worthy to look upon the city he was not able to conquer."

Even after Richard and his associate kings, Louis of France and Conrad of Germany, had given up the enterprise, Europe still struggled to redeem the Holy Land. Seven great crusades were preached. The kings of France, of England, of Denmark, the emperor of Germany, and the princes of Italy successively engaged in them. They all failed, and they cost the lives of countless men.

By the year 1291 the crusading spirit had passed A.D. away, and there was not a foot of soil in Palestine 1291 which belonged to the Christians. The followers of Mohammed ruled the land, as they have done even unto this day.

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But while the crusades were a complete failure in the direct object aimed at, they were of great, though indirect, benefit to mankind. They brought the people of the West together for the first time in a great national movement, based upon an exalted idea. They obliterated, to a great extent, private feuds and private wars among

the feudal lords. They gave impetus to the upward tendency of the lower ranks, and they indirectly diminished the power of the nobles. They brought the Western people into contact with the civilization of the Roman Empire of the East, and of the Mohammedans of Syria and Asia Minor, each of which was immensely superior to that of Europe. They stimulated commerce and the mechanical arts. They broadened the knowledge and liberalized the views of the European statesmen. Finally, they dispelled the mental paralysis which had benumbed the minds of men upon the subject of their relations to the Church. People were taught in a way they could not forget, the fallibility of all mortals, whether clerical or lay. The head of the Church had sanctioned and encouraged and, in fact, dictated the crusades. Success was guaranteed in the most solemn and positive terms. False miracles and pretended prophecies were called to the aid of the priesthood in arousing the people. It was confidently taught that Christ would not suffer his followers to be defeated in a contest with the deluded fanatics who believed in Mohammed.

Yet no glossing of the record could hide the fact from the dullest serf that the enterprise had been a prodigious failure. In spite of the millions of lives wasted, in spite of the untold treasures squandered, in spite of all the prayers and all the powers of Christian Europe and her bravest and best men, the despised infidel had driven them off the continent in hopeless defeat. Hence the people of Europe, in spite of themselves, learned a most valuable lesson. After that period the blind credulity of the laity was not quite so strong. Miracles grew scarcer. Spurious prophecies found fewer

dupes. Almost apologetically, people began to do some thinking for themselves. A little independence of conviction timidly claimed the right to live. The tremendous difference between the churchman and the layman lessened itself somewhat. Men grasped the thought that the "will of God" was not necessarily what some enthusiastic priest said it was, even though the Pope and the multitude assented thereto.

In brief, the pretensions of the Church as custodian of the Divine pleasure had received a check from which it never recovered, and its mastery over kings and peoples was never afterwards so great.

Religion took its first step toward that splendid eminence it now holds — complete independence of earthly trappings and measurements and intolerant dictations; complete freedom for the mind to choose its creed and to shape its course thereby, fearing no wrath and courting no approval save that of God.

Just as travelling broadens the individual man of to-day, and gives him juster conceptions of men and things, so the crusades widened the mental horizon of European nations.

They went forth among Eastern peoples expecting to find uncouth and cowardly opponents, who would run at the sight of mail-clad knights and flaming banners. They met men who were better equipped than themselves, mounted on better horses, armed with better weapons, led by better generals, and burning with as fierce a courage as their own. They found in the East more culture, more refinement, more luxury, more science, more civilization, than they had left at home.

They found the despised Arabs practising medicine,

and curing disease with nature's remedies. At home the priest forbade the physician to meddle with God's will, and the sick man was left to be cured by prayers, relics, and miracles.

From these Arabs, through the crusaders, Europe learned the use of narcotics, of potassium, nitrate of silver, corrosive sublimate, nitric and sulphuric acid, camphor, senna, rhubarb, and alcohol. Arab surgeons were skilful, their materia medica extensive, and many of their modes of treatment survive among us to this day.

The Arab's house of the better class was a marvel of elegance, his farm a model, his garden a paradise. Even now the remains of Arabic architecture are among the most exquisitely lovely specimens to be found on earth. The Alhambra of Grenada, the Alcazar of Seville, are so full of the pathos of a civilization which is forever gone that they fill us with a sadness no tongue can utter.

His garden was a thing of beauty. The most luscious fruits hung over its marble walks, the rarest flowers filled it with perfume, birds sang in the depths of the glorious trees, and upon the ear fell with soothing melody the plash of fountains.

His farm was a picture of order and fruitfulness. Science assisted nature, fertilizers were studied with regard to their special fitness for special crops, systematic irrigation supplied perpetual moisture, and the earth was green and luxuriant from germination to golden harvest. The Arab knew how to graft, how to improve on nature's varieties and multiply them. He knew how to make syrup and sugar from cane, and no wines were choicer than his.

In manufactures he was an artist. His glass and pottery

were of the finest quality, his textile fabrics unsurpassed in excellence, and he was not to be rivalled in working leather, dyed cloths, paper, gold, silver, copper, iron, and steel.

The Damascus blade of romance was Arabic, so was the pendulum, the windmill, the arch, the dome, the minaret; and if they did not invent the numerals we use, they certainly made vast improvements in our knowledge of geometry, mathematics, astronomy. Algebra is their undoubted creation, and so is decimal notation, and the naught of our numeral tables.

To the crusades we owe the introduction of the best type of the horse. We owe to it likewise the donkey and the mule.

The Arab was the creator of a splendid civilization. He had flourishing cities, a wide commerce, great schools, a literature of poetry and prose, manufactures in a high state of development, agriculture productive and profitable.

In Asia Minor and Spain this Arabian civilization was seen at its best: the Turks stamped it down in Asia, and the Christians destroyed it in Spain.

CHAPTER X

CHIVALRY

IN the shade of some old forest in Germany, it was the custom of the tribe in early times to assemble and witness the ceremony which marked the advance of the young warrior from boyhood into manhood. The form was simple. The chief of the tribe, in the presence of the assembly, placed in the hands of the youth a sword and a shield. These were the badges of his manhood, and from thenceforth his name was enrolled among the free citizens and warriors of his tribe.

The oaks do not more surely grow from the acorns, the rivers from the far-away springs, than do great systems from simple beginnings. Out of the scanty materials supplied by this ancient custom of their German forefathers, the French developed one of the most splendid, elaborate, and unnatural systems ever known to the human race.

Chivalry has been defined as an armed force enlisted in the service of unarmed truth. Another writer says, "Chivalry is the Christian form of the military profession; the knight is the Christian soldier." Still another says, "It was in that terrible hour," the Dark Ages, "that the Church undertook the education of the Christian soldier, and offered, to the brutal and lawless feudal chieftain, a lofty ideal of noble endeavour."

Chivalry was a close corporation, of military and reli-

gious character, whose members were called knights, and who were chosen from the aristocracy. Riches were not essential to knighthood, but high birth was. Only a gentleman could aspire to membership. In those days, one who was born in the upper circles was a gentleman, no matter how vile were his manners or his character.

When one of the boys of a feudal lord was intended for membership in this corporation, his training for it commenced when he was seven years old. Removed from the care of women, he was usually brought up in the castle of some neighbouring lord, under the teachings of men. Until he was fourteen years old he was called a page. He was taught obedience, courtesy, truthfulness, respect for women, and reverence for the Church. He was made to serve and to obey. He was expected to help about the domestic work of the castle, to get the table ready for the meals in the great hall. He must lay the cloth and arrange the dishes. He must serve the lord of the castle and his lady while they are eating. He must be attentive and polite to the distinguished visitors at the castle. He must learn how to read, how to hunt, how to ride, and how to pray. In exceptional cases he may be taught to write. His copy-book will be a wax tablet and his pen will be an iron rod with a sharp point. He will be carefully taught that the world is flat. Maps will be shown him to prove it. He will believe it, all through his bones, just as we believe so many similar errors, because they were hammered into our heads when we were young.

His books will tell him that there are lands where the sun never shines, where the grain will not grow, where the rocks are all black, where there is no dew, and whose inhabitants are demons. They will tell him of others

more terrible still — lands where the skins of the men are harder than iron; of others where the people feed on decaying flesh; of others where the chins and teeth of the inhabitants are united directly to their chests; of others where the men have horns like sheep; of others where they bark like dogs; of others where they have claws and feet like lions, and where their roaring shakes the earth for nine miles around. He will be solemnly told that in Albania all the men are born with white hair; and that in Cappadocia the mares bring forth colts whose paternity is due entirely to the wind.

He will believe every word of this as long as he lives, because he saw it in the books. If he should dare to say he thought the whole thing a pack of lies, bred of ignorance and superstition, the teacher would probably flog him all over the castle and back again.

It has ever been considered an outrageous piece of impudence for people, especially young people, to cast doubt upon the things that are set down in the books.

Above all, he will be taught the use of arms. The sword, the lance, the battle-axe, he must master. His strength, his activity, his skill must be developed in the highest possible degree.

The knight was always a cavalryman. He never marched or fought on foot when it could be avoided. Hence to know everything concerning horsemanship was absolutely necessary.

A great deal of the hunting in those days was done with hawks and hounds. He was therefore taught how to capture the young hawks, how to rear them, how to train and how to hunt them. The sport consisted in taking a tame hawk, duly trained, to the fields, flying it at

such game as was started, following it as it pursued, fought, and conquered its victim, and then calling it back to the hand until other game should be found. This barbarous pastime was the favourite amusement in the Middle Ages. It is still practised in some Eastern lands.

From the age of fourteen until he became a knight, the young man whose education we are following was called a squire.

It was his duty to attend his lord, both in peace and in war. He must look after the horses, curry and keep them in proper form for use. He must take care of the armour of the lord, keep his sword and lance in good order and ready for any call.

He must follow his lord on the march, serving him faithfully in all his needs. When battle is given, he must station himself just in the rear; must be ready to supply his lord with a fresh sword or lance or horse; must care for him if wounded; must bear his body from the field if he is killed. But he must not, as a rule, join in the fight himself, unless he and the opposing squires should happen to clash.

In times of peace the squire makes himself useful and ornamental about the castle. He blows the horn for dinner. He provides water to bathe the hands of the guests. He sets the table, carves the meat, pours the wine, hands the bread.

He receives the visitors, conducts them to their rooms in the castle, and attends to their comfort. When the lord wakes up of mornings, it is the squire's duty to dress him. When he gets drunk at dinner, which is frequent, the squire must see him put to bed like a gentleman.

To brighten up the other side of the picture, the

knights were in the habit of giving them the prizes won in the tournaments and battles.

At the age of twenty-one, as a general thing, the order of knighthood was formally and solemnly conferred upon the squire. This rule was not universal or arbitrary.

Theodoric said of the Goths: "As soon as a young barbarian was big enough to fight, he became of age." Size and strength and courage, therefore, often carried boys of fifteen into the ranks of knighthood. Some special deed of daring frequently brought the youth to the notice of his lord or king on the field of battle, and the golden spurs and the consecrated sword would be his reward. "To win his spurs" by gallant service was the burning desire of every high-born Frenchman, and, from his childhood, it was ever in his thoughts.

Let us witness the ceremonial through which knighthood is entered by the squire whose education we have been following.

Great preparations will be made at the castle for the occasion. There will be much expense and much display.

On the day preceding the ceremony, the squire will put off all his clothing and will enter the bath, which is symbolical of purification. On leaving the bath his attendants will clothe him in a white tunic, emblem of purity; in a red robe, typifying the blood he will shed in defence of the faith; and in a black, close-fitting coat, a reminder of the death which awaits him, as well as all men.

Thus clothed, he will fast for twenty-four hours. When evening comes, having confessed his sins, he enters the church to pass the night in prayer.

This was a grand idea of the Catholic Church. If anything on earth could impress upon the savage warriors of

those days the solemnity of the vows of chivalry, this "vigil of arms" would do it. Fancy the young man standing before the altar in the lonely church all night. Candles burn dimly in the darkness; the silence suggests trains of thought which come at no other time. Just outside is the quiet graveyard, where his ancestors and their neighbours sleep. Upon the altar lies his armour, awaiting consecration. The candles burn dimly on, the hours move by on heavy feet, and the young man watches and prays — for he must watch and pray until morning comes.

Many are the watchings we poor mortals undertake. We watch beside the bed of sickness, in the house of death; we stand guard, on sentinel service, while the army sleeps; we sit in the pilot-house as the hurrying vessel ploughs the midnight seas; we drive the iron horse through sleeping towns and country homesteads, splitting with luminous headlight the sullen worlds of darkness; but of all the vigils we have ever taken, few can rival, in the picture they fashion in the mind, that of the lonely warrior in the dim and solemn sanctuary of the ages long ago.

Dawn comes at length and the vigil is over. The priest arrives, and the morning service of the church begins.

Having heard mass and received the communion, the tired watcher will hurry back to the castle and enjoy the breakfast which awaits him there.

Then, either in the church or in the open space before the castle, the company will assemble to witness the initiation.

The priest will bless the sword, and the candidate kneel before his lord.

High-born friends will draw near and put the armour

on. Golden spurs are buckled on his feet; armour is fastened upon his body and limbs until he is completely enclosed in plates of steel. There is a plate to be fastened on the chest, one on the back, others for thighs and knees and legs and arms. They will be so nicely joined together by smaller joints, that only an expert with the sword or lance can ever penetrate to the body thus defended. There are iron coverings for the feet and for the head and face and neck. When all this heavy metal is strapped on he will be one of the queerest looking creatures that ever flourished. If he should ever fall flat on his back it will require much scuffling for him to get up again.

With the exception of two holes for his eyes and others to breathe through, his iron case is complete. His weapons will be the sword, the battle-axe, the mace, and the lance. The lance was a long wooden pole, usually made out of ash, and pointed with steel at the end. It was considered the greatest triumph to run the pole through the body of some other knight and have three or four feet of it sticking out from his back. To ward off these lances, he will have a metallic shield, almost as big as a barn door, which he will hold up in front when the other fellow lunges at him with the iron-pointed pole.

We will now suppose that the armour has been duly strapped on.

The lord then rises, and, with the flat of the sword, strikes him lightly three times on the shoulder, saying, "In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I make thee a knight. Be valiant, bold, and loyal."

Then the helmet is put on his head, a horse is led up, and, if he wishes to win praise, he leaps to the saddle without touching foot to stirrup. This ends the ceremony,

but he will take part in a sham fight, or he will gallop about showing off his skill, to please the spectators and win their applause.

The knight has to swear to the following articles: —

1. To believe all that the Church teaches and to obey its directions.
2. To defend the Church, the widow, and the orphan.
3. To defend the weak.
4. To love his native land.
5. To avoid a retreat from an enemy.
6. To war against the infidels constantly and without mercy.
7. To perform all feudal duties.
8. To keep his pledges and never lie.
9. To be generous and charitable.
10. To be, always and everywhere, a champion of the right and the good against injustice and evil.

Here then the Catholic Church furnished its ideal to the soldier. Finding him brutalized and brutalizing, finding him bent upon rapine and slaughter all his days, selfish, bestial, and inhumanely cruel, it sought to elevate him, by giving the noblest aims and methods to his chosen profession.

Though the chivalry created a caste, and to that extent was vicious; though it sought to devote the passion of war and the practice of bloodshed to motives and methods of purity, and to that extent was unnatural, — yet it was immensely superior to the order of things that went before. It gave the world romantic theories of courage, generosity, self-sacrifice, patriotism, and devotion to duty, which were new to it; and which, even to this day, colour the thoughts, the speech, and the deeds of men.

In the annals of the brave there are no brighter records than those of the knights who loved their order and gave their lives to its vows. Roland and Oliver, whose fame is linked with that of Charlemagne, and whose death gave immortality to the ambuscade at Roncesvalles; Tancred and Godfrey, whose glory is embalmed in Tasso's great epic of "Jerusalem Delivered"; Bertrand Du Guesclin, the national hero of France; Chevalier Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach, — these are some of the splendid soldiers whose lives made their order illustrious, and made the word chivalrous a term of compliment which brings the honest flush of pride and pleasure to the cheeks of gallant men even in our own times.

Ringing down the ages came this thrilling conception of true courage, than which mortal man can have no higher: It is not death the soldier fears, but dishonour!

Blazing on every page of ritual or of annals, was this golden line, fixing the high-water mark beyond which self-consecration cannot rise: Be thou the defender and the champion of the Church, the widow, and the orphan!

In those barbarous days of private and public feud, foreign and domestic war, the cry of the widow and the orphan must have been heard constantly in all the land; and the historian gives ungrudging praise to the men of God who stayed with vows and with stern injunctions the hand of the marauder, and put his sword to their defence.

What made the pass at Roncesvalles the Thermopylæ of the Middle Ages? It was the sublime courage of the knights who died, to a man, making good the defence of the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army against sudden and overwhelming assault. No wonder the cheeks of the

great emperor were wet with tears as he came back with avenging hosts next day and marked where the brave men fought and fell. Not one had sought to fly. Not one had sounded the horn for relief. Duty called for their lives, and each warrior had answered "Here!"

On the monument erected at Thermopylæ were these words: "Go tell those at Sparta that we lie here in obedience to her law." High is the pinnacle upon which humanity towers, when it so teaches, so lives, and so dies.

But Roland, lying on the rocks of Roncesvalles, "his gauntlet outstretched to God," his comrades lying bloody and motionless around him, are equally the types of heroic self-sacrifice.

"See, death approaches! But, as brave men, let us die fighting!"

And thus they fell.

Every song of chivalry was pitched to this strain; Combat all evil; defend all good. Even the double-edged sword was emblematic: "With one side thou must strike the rich who oppress the poor; with the other, punish the strong who persecute the weak."

Chivalry decayed, as all human institutions decay. Wealth and power corrupted and enervated its members. Kings grew jealous of some of the orders and put them down. Standing in the way of the advancement of the lower classes, they became obstacles to progress. When gunpowder was invented and the coat of mail was found to be no defence against bullets, the infantry militia, mustered from the commons, had little difficulty in overthrowing the mail-clad cavalry of the aristocrats.

Chivalry, as an institution, had lived out its day; and

the armour of the knight was hung up on the castle walls, to be taken down no more. No longer waved his plumes along the ruddy tide of battle; no longer did his silken banner mark the path where the bravest loved to fight.

In the fervid lines of the poet, on stirring pages of romance, the knight might still ride, boldly ride, seeking adventures; might still rescue captive maidens, challenge to mortal combat the widow's oppressor, restore with valiant sword the orphan's patrimony; might still pursue infidels in far Eastern lands, or do battle at home for Church and king.

But in actual life he moved no more.

Deep down under the past lies the old feudalism, and its highest development, Chivalry. Ivy grows green around the ruined castle wall. The owls and the bats are in the guest-chamber, little disturbed by the ghostly memories which hang about the place. Out in the courtyard where the pages and squires used to brawl or sport is a wilderness of rubbish and desolation.

The king who prized their valour; the lady who smiled upon it and rewarded it; the enemies who hated them and feared them; the friends who loved them and trusted them; the priest who prayed for them and relied upon them; the widow and the orphan who sought them and found them; the poor to whom they cast occasional pence, and who passed all their stupid days admiring them and supporting them; the minstrel who sang their praises, the herald who noted their deeds — all, all are gone, forever gone.

"The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, we trust."

CHAPTER XI

LOUIS THE FAT TO PHILIP THE FAIR

Reforms in Government and Decline of Feudalism

(1108-1314)

LOUIS THE FAT came to the throne at a time when its very existence was threatened. His immediate predecessors had been such weaklings that royal authority had sunk to the lowest point, and the kingdom was a pitiable scene of disorder and wretchedness. A.D. 1108

The feudal lords had become robbers as well as tyrants. They imprisoned merchants and travellers in their castles, and refused to liberate them without the payment of large ransom. If the merchant was a little slow in coming to terms, they helped him to a decision by mashing his feet in an iron vise, by crushing his thumbs in a thumb-screw, or by roasting him over a slow fire. They also robbed the churches, and ill-treated the clergy.

Louis the Fat made common cause with the clergy who were outraged by the plundering of churches, and with the town people who were tired of being robbed; and he made successful war upon the feudal aristocracy. He was ever on horseback, lance in hand, leading his forces against lawless barons, storming their castles, and dispersing their ruffian bands. While many of the lords were ruining themselves to join in the crusades, Louis the Fat stayed at home, husbanded his resources, and took

the side of the people against feudal oppression. From his reign dates the ardent attachment of the French to their king.

In return for help which the king received from the workmen of the towns, he granted them charters which allowed them self-government, and exempted them from the hateful power and the hateful taxes of the feudal lords. From this time commerce began to flourish and the merchants and towns to grow rich. The roads began to be safe for travellers and the country to be orderly.

The city of Paris is now the most splendid in the world; but in those days its trade was unimportant, its buildings were shabby, and its streets were narrow, dirty,
A.D. 1131 and full of pigs. In the year 1131 the oldest son of the king was riding through Paris and one of these pigs ran between the legs of the prince's horse, causing him to fall. The young man was so badly hurt that he died in a few hours.

A.D. 1101 In this reign the schools of Paris won great celebrity. Abelard, a scholar famous for his genius, learning, and misfortunes, filled Europe with his fame, and attracted immense numbers of students to France.

Abelard was the pioneer of free thought. He challenged accepted errors, threw the luminous spear of inquiry against the shield of orthodox dulness, and made it ring throughout Christendom. Along the lines of respectable mediocrity ran a shiver of alarm. The owls that drowsily sat upon the dead limbs of the tree of knowledge woke to sudden life, and united in a startled hoot.

Abelard was pounced upon and crushed. They found

that he, a scholar and teacher, loved Héloïse, his pupil, a girl of beauty and rare accomplishments; and that she loved him. They found that nature and love had carried the brilliant teacher and his lovely pupil beyond the limits of Platonic affection; in fact, there was a child. Great was the pity of it, great was the sin, great was the clamour.

Ruffian enemies broke in upon Abelard at night, struck him down, and inflicted upon him a grievous injury. He survived, but his manhood and his courage were gone, and when he arose in after years to defend himself from Bernard of Clairvaux, his rival and his foe, — to defend himself, in grand council, in presence of his king and all the attendant lords and ladies of the realm, — the great orator's fire had left him; he rose, stammered, turned pale, trembled like a leaf, and sat down, disgraced.

His book was condemned and burned; the Council of Sens pronounced censure upon him, and two years afterwards he died (1142), a lonely, friendless, heart-broken monk.

His ashes were claimed by Héloïse, who had become the most devout of nuns; and these two, at length, found rest beneath the same tomb.

After greatly augmenting the royal authority and wealth, Louis the Fat died, and was succeeded by his son, Louis VII. A.D. 1137

During this reign the second crusade was preached by the celebrated Bernard; and the Christian forces were led by the king himself. The result was so shamefully disastrous that Louis returned to France in the utmost discredit. A.D. 1147

His queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who had brought

him a magnificent dowry, became disgusted with him —and he with her; a divorce was pronounced, soon after which she carried her dowry and her hand to Henry Plantagenet, afterwards king of England under the name of Henry II.

By this marriage, so fatal to France, Henry became the lord of provinces which, added to his own, made him more powerful than the king. Anjou, Maine, Touraine, Poitou, Aquitaine, and Normandy were all his, and had not his ambition led him toward England first, Louis VII. would probably have been dethroned by his powerful vassal and his resentful, ambitious wife. Happily for France, Henry gave deadly offence to the entire Christian world by his instigation of the murder of Archbishop Becket, and the balance of his life was clouded with failure and family strife.

Louis VII. continued his father's policy, seconded the growth of the communes, laid a heavy hand upon certain rebellious nobles, and added to the royal domains. Many towns were built during his reign, and much land cleared for cultivation. These internal improvements were chiefly due to the Abbot Suger, who was the regent of the kingdom during the absence of the king, and the most influential adviser before and after that event.

These communes were the first great barriers against feudal tyranny. Within the towns, where peaceful industries began to flourish, there came an irresistible demand for security. Merchants and artisans grew tired of being robbed by the lord of the castle. A common necessity drew the citizens into organization for defence. Guilds were formed, brotherhood cultivated, an oath of mutual support sworn, arms collected, a big bell hung

aloft in the tower of the town hall to summon the commune at the approach of danger, and all things made ready to give my lord of the castle a hot reception the next time he swooped down from his hill-fortress to loot the town.

These communal organizations were not democratic in form or spirit. In the town itself there were higher orders and lower orders; rich and poor, privileged and unprivileged. Only the wealthier citizens and the more important trades had a share in the city government. The communes were based upon principles aristocratic rather than democratic. Consequently, fierce contentions frequently raged, the lower orders clamouring for admission into the communal privileges, powers, and benefits, and the upper classes resisting the demand. Not only did the communes resist the feudal lord, they opposed also the domination of the clergy. Hence they antagonized two very powerful influences. It is true that the independence of the communes gradually sank under the ascendency of royal power, but they had done a most important work; they had broken the spell of feudal terror, revived the spirit of commerce, and given the first impulse to manufactures.

Philip Augustus succeeded Louis VII. (1180). Under his government royal authority rapidly grew. He wrested Normandy from the English, built colleges, schools, and churches, humbled the nobles, and increased the royal domain. A.D. 1180

In his reign occurred the Albigensian crusade. In Languedoc lived a cultured, prosperous people, who had built flourishing cities, and had created a civilization superior to that of northern France.

But they were heretics. They did not obey the Pope. They denied his supremacy, refused to pay him tribute, and declared that the worship of images was idolatry — just as Charlemagne had done. They also denied the Real Presence in the Eucharist; that is, they denied that sacramental wine and bread became the actual flesh and blood of Christ.

A.D. 1208 A "holy war" was preached against these people. To the feudal chiefs who agreed to march against them the Pope promised to give the lands taken; to the soldiers who would serve forty days was promised full pardon for all sins that they had ever committed.

On these fair terms multitudes of men were eager to purchase passage to heaven, and a great army was organized, and put under command of Simon de Montfort. Languedoc was laid in waste, its homes burnt, its people butchered. The cruel contest lasted twenty years. As an example of the barbarous spirit in which this "holy war" was fought, we are told that when the town of Béziers was attacked, one of the officers asked the abbot of Citeaux how they were to tell the heretics from the true believers in the town. "Kill them all," replied this gentle disciple of the Prince of Peace, "for the Lord will know those that are his."

The savage order was savagely executed. Not a man, or woman, or child was left alive.

The territory thus taken was given by the Pope to Simon de Montfort, the chief robber and murderer.

He did not live long to enjoy his bloody spoils. As he was riding under the walls of Toulouse, which he was besieging, a stone, shot from one of the engines on the walls, killed him.

Philip Augustus refused to lend a hand in this bloody business, although the Pope imperiously urged him to do so. In fact he was the first of the French kings, after Charlemagne, who displayed a genius for order, reform, and royal independence. He repressed the barons, and resisted with firmness the domination of the Church.

For putting away his wife, Ingeborg of Denmark, and marrying the beautiful Agnes of Méranie, he fell under the papal ban, was excommunicated, and the kingdom laid under an interdict.

Philip defied the Pope, and continued to live with Agnes; but the conscience of the nation was troubled, and finally the king, after a struggle of eight years, yielded — for in truth his case was indefensible. The Pope, in pity for Agnes, who had acted in good faith, and was a lovable woman, legitimatized her two children, but she herself died under the blow.

Philip Augustus showed a crafty skill in creating trouble for his neighbours. He kept the royal family of England in perpetual discord, first urging the sons of Henry II. to make war on their father; and, after the death of the father, sowing dissension among the sons. By these shameful acts he finally won back Normandy from the Norman dukes, after they had held it three hundred years.

Philip was severe on blasphemers; the rich he fined twenty golden sous, the poor he flung into the river.

Against Jews he had all of the mediæval prejudice; he stripped them of their wealth, and drove them out of France.

As a warrior, Philip gained renown at the battle of Bouvines (1214), where he defeated the Flemings under the emperor of Germany, Otto IV. A.D. 1214

In the crusades, however, he had been overshadowed by the superior personal and warlike qualities of Richard Cœur de Lion, and the quarrels of the two kings brought division of counsel and failure to the enterprise.

He died in 1223, having added to his dominions Normandy, Anjou, Touraine, Poitou, Vermandois, Artois, Amienois, and part of Auvergne. His reign greatly strengthened the royal power, for he called in the troops of the communes to aid him in his struggles against the nobles, checked the pretensions and limited the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, repressed feudal aggressions, and enforced the jurisdiction of his own courts and his own ordinances.

A.D. 1223 Louis VIII., son and successor of Philip Augustus, reigned only three years.

Continuing his father's policy, Louis besieged and took several important towns which had remained in possession of the English.

Urged thereto by the Pope, he renewed the Albigensian crusade, led an army of fifty thousand men to the south of France, the expressed purpose of the campaign being to root the heretics out of the land. Avignon was besieged, taken, and sacked, its defenders hanged, its fortifications dismantled. He was preparing to march A.D. 1226 against Toulouse to inflict upon it a similar fate, when the pestilence which raged in his army struck him down, and he died at Montpensier (1226).

Louis IX. was only twelve years of age at his father's death; and his mother, Blanche of Castile, assumed the regency.

For nine years she ruled the kingdom, and ruled it wisely. The feudal lords conspired against her and

rebelled, but she put them down, partly by force and partly by good management.

She secured to the crown by treaty with Raymond of Toulouse (1229) the cession of Lower Languedoc; and she reduced the Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany to obedience. A.D. 1229

She was an able ruler, not free from guile or cruelty, but guided, in the main, by high motives of State.

Her son, known to history as St. Louis, deferred to her very much even after he became of age, and she remained virtual ruler of the kingdom as long as she lived.

Louis led an army to the East in 1248, in the vain attempt to drive Mohammed's disciples out of Palestine. Landing in Egypt, he met with nothing but misfortunes. The bulk of his army was destroyed either by sword or pestilence, and the king himself was made prisoner by the infidels.

For the sum of $2,000,000 they agreed to release Louis and the remnant of his forces. The French people loyally raised the money and paid the ransom. So hard was it to find so much coin in France that they even had to melt down the silver railings around the tomb of Richard the Lion-Hearted, at Rouen, and turn them into money. A.D. 1252

Returning to France, Louis found his mother dead, and his kingdom deplorably disordered. He set to work, at once, to pacify, reform, strengthen, and develop. He made peace with England, abolished trial by combat in his own domains and thus set the example for his barons, extended the jurisdiction of his courts, encouraged appeals from the barons in their courts to the judges in his own, sent royal commissioners through all the provinces, as Charlemagne had done, to defend his own rights and

those of his subjects; he fostered the cities, not as independent corporations, but as feudal bodies, enjoying local self-government, but dependent on the supreme royal power.

He found eighty-four bishops and lords exercising the right to coin money. He confined this money to the dominions of the noble who coined it, prescribed its weight and fineness, and, at the same time, decreed that his own money should be received throughout the realm. Thus France had, at last, a national currency.

A more devoted son of the Church than St. Louis never lived, but his sense of right was as strong as his religion, and he made the Church contribute to the support of the government by the payment of tithes and other taxes.

He established a public library at Paris, and the first
A.D. hospital for the blind. A theological seminary, the Sor-
1253 bonne, so named after its founder, Robert de Sorbon, came into existence at this time, and soon began to exert vast influence upon public sentiment.

The tongues of blasphemers St. Louis caused to be pierced with red-hot needles; and all men who took interest on loans were usurers in his sight, and hateful. He seized upon one hundred and fifty bankers, at one time, and flung them into dungeons, because they had loaned money at interest.

St. Louis was a marvellous king, a marvellous man. He loved justice, was prone to mercy and good works, held every son of God to be his brother, and delighted to make peace instead of war. He voluntarily gave up certain domains which he thought his predecessors had unjustly taken from England; and, while full of courage and ready to fight, if need be, conciliation was pref-

erable to him before the battle, and reconciliation afterwards.

He made it a rule to feed one hundred and twenty beggars every day, and three of them were brought in to eat at the same time with the king himself, and in the same room. "Many a time," says Joinville, "I saw him cut their bread and give them to drink."

In person he listened to those who appealed to the king's justice. Seated in his garden in Paris or under some great tree in the wood of Vincennes, the good king would listen patiently to the poorest suitor, and promptly adjudge his case.

Mixing freely with his people, and constantly moving about among them, he knew them as they actually were. He loved them, and was loved by them, most sincerely. He visited the sick, fed the poor, redressed wrongs, corrected abuses, and was a Christian king, if ever there was one, in spite of his prejudice against bankers.

By an act known as the Pragmatic Sanction, he secured the liberties of the French Church from papal exactions, — making it illegal for the Pope to levy any tax upon French prelates without the royal assent, and prescribing certain cases in which appeals might be taken from the ecclesiastical to the royal courts.

After sixteen years of prosperous administration in France, he was seized with another attack of the crusading fever; and, in spite of the urgent entreaties of his friends, he raised an army, and set out upon the eighth and last crusade.

He landed in Africa, on his way to Palestine, and laid siege to Tunis.

Sickness soon began to destroy his troops. It entered

his own family, and was fatal to one of his sons. Then the king was stricken. Finding himself at the point of death, he bade his attendants lay him upon a bed of ashes.

In this lowly posture the good king died, saying, "I will enter thy house, O Lord; I will worship in thy holy tabernacle."

A.D. 1270 Louis IX., or St. Louis, was succeeded (1270) by his son Philip the Hardy, or Bold. Historians fail to discover why he was called either hardy or bold. In fact, it is difficult to name anything he did, or anything he said, which deserves rescue from oblivion. He lived, reigned, and died — such seems to be all there is in the record.

A.D. 1282 It was during his time that the Sicilians organized against the French that massacre which is known as the Sicilian Vespers — a murder of one entire people by another. The evening bell for vespers was the signal for the assassins to begin their bloody task — hence the name.

Philip the Hardy died in 1285, and was succeeded by Philip the Fair, a great king, and a great criminal.

He was active and successful; was cruel, proud, treacherous, and avaricious. He plundered his subjects, made them pay heavy taxes, debased the gold and silver money, by melting it down and putting baser metals with it, in recoinage.

To get rid of a mortgage which the late king had given the Italian bankers, Philip seized all the Italian merchants and bankers who were in France, threatened them with torture, and forced them to redeem themselves at an immense price. His pretext was that the Italians were usurers.

Pleased with the result of this expedient, he repeated

it on Frenchmen, and found it to work equally well. In this manner he opened up new sources of revenue hitherto unknown in France.

He asked the Pope's consent to levy a tax on the clergy for the purpose of raising money for a crusade. The Pope consented, and Philip came down upon the clergy with a grievous tax. They paid, with heavy hearts, and then the king did *not* go upon the crusade.

Suspecting that the wives of his three sons were unfaithful, he threw them into prison, and, seizing the supposed lovers, had them flayed alive.

He arrested, in one day, all the Jews in the kingdom, threw them into prison, and confiscated their wealth.

Philip, however, gave a decided halt to papal aggressions and to feudal power.

He was the first French king after Charles the Great who successfully defied the Pope; and he was the first who called into the national assembly deputies from the towns.

He excluded priests from the administration of justice, barring them out of his own courts and those of the barons; and he levied such heavy taxes upon the estates given to the Church that such estates became more profitable to him than to the Church.

Having arrested the bishop of Pamiers for reasons sufficient to himself, Philip demanded of the Pope, Boniface VIII., the prelate's degradation. Instead of yielding to this demand, the Pope launched an admonitory bull against Philip. The king assembled the States General (1302), appealed to their loyalty and national pride, secured their support, and publicly burnt the bull in their presence. A.D. 1302

The Pope, furious at this unheard-of irreverence, excommunicated the king. Not at all scared, Philip called up his barons, and got them to declare the Pope a heretic.

Armed with this sentence, the king arrested the Pope, and one of the royal agents, Colonna by name, struck the aged prelate with his iron gauntlet. The Pope was courageous and defiant, and the people soon rose and set him free; but he had received such a shock at the unexpected turn things had taken, and was so inflamed
A D. by rage and shame, that he fell into a fever, and died at
1303 Rome a month afterwards (1303).

Philip, completely victorious, was soon able to secure the election of a Pope entirely devoted, by a special agreement, to himself.

This was Clement V. who was elected in 1305 on the death of Benedict XI.

The most memorable episode of Philip's reign was his destruction of the Templars.

These soldiers of the cross had been organized and inspired by the famous St. Bernard, and they had borne the brunt of the fighting in the crusades for two centuries. While the Christian kingdom in Palestine endured, they had been the dread of the Saracens and the hope of the crusaders. They formed a knightly caste apart, consecrated to special work and enjoying special privileges. They were exempt from all customs, toll, and tribute; they were judges in their own causes, the final appeal being to the Pope; they dispensed with the absolutions of priests, for the masters in the order exercised that power themselves.

That such an order should become too strong and provoke jealousy was natural. Richard Cœur de Lion

hated them, and said, when dying, "I leave my avarice to the Cistercians, my luxury to the Gray friars, and my pride to the Templars."

At last Antioch fell, and the crusades were over. The Holy Land was abandoned, and the Knights of the Temple came home. But they brought back all their pride, all their exclusiveness, all their privileges, and all their money. Feuds had broken out in Palestine among the Christians themselves, and the Templars had made powerful enemies throughout Europe.

So, when they returned, the storm slowly gathered over their proud, unthinking heads. They held high language to kings and to priests. After two centuries of fighting, they had sunk into sloth, and perhaps into vice. They offended by the display of their wealth and by the veiled mysteries of their inner life. Ugly rumours flew abroad, and they became hateful.

In France they had especially provoked wrath. They had slain a member of the royal house, had taken sides against it in political disputes, and had refused to contribute toward the ransom of St. Louis. To Philip the Fair they had become intolerably offensive; they had supported him, under protest, against the Pope, had refused him admission into their order, had saved his life in a riot which his tyranny had provoked, and had loaned him money which he could not repay.

Philip determined to destroy this useless, dangerous, and unpopular corporation. The consent of Clement had been obtained by the king as a condition precedent to his election as Pope. Besides, it was agreed that the confiscated wealth of the Templars should be divided between the Pope and the king. These precautions having been taken,

Philip the Fair lulled the heads of the order into a sense of false security, invited them to Paris, heaped favours upon them, asked the grand master to stand godfather to one of his children, and named this grand master, Jacques de Molay, to act as pall-bearer, on October 12, at the funeral of his sister-in-law.

A.D. 1307 On the 13th of October the bolt fell. Molay was arrested, and, with him, 140 Templars who had assembled at Paris. Similar arrests were made throughout the kingdom.

Public sentiment was all with Philip. He had worked it up, adroitly assisted by the monks and the barons.

The doomed men were brought to trial upon the most absurd charges: the worship of Mohammed, of the devil in the form of a cat, and of a head with silver beard and flaming eyes. They were also accused of spitting on the cross, turning their naked backs to the altar, denying God, and other crimes.

Under torture, the knights confessed everything; relieved of the torture, they withdrew their confessions, and protested that they were not guilty of any sins saving those incident to common humanity.

The king, the Pope, the barons, the people, were all against these wretched Templars, sole remnant of the once glorious crusades; they were condemned, and were burnt to death at slow fires. Their immense wealth was divided between the king and the Church, and 15,000 families were ruined by this colossal confiscation.

Jacques de Molay went to his death like a hero, protesting his innocence. In a loud voice he called on Philip and Clement, king and Pope, to meet him before the judgment-bar of God within a year. Within the year both Philip and Clement had gone to answer the summons.

It is a curious fact that the Templars were ruined chiefly by an act in which there was neither real nor intended crime. In the ceremony of initiation they had introduced the denial of his Lord by Peter, and this denial of Peter was symbolically represented by spitting on the cross. When the evidence disclosed this fact, universal horror took possession of the people. They shivered to the very marrow, crossed themselves, and refused to hear a word of explanation or defence.

It does not appear that Philip the Fair was actuated by any motives other than those of political expediency when he called to the States General of 1302 the deputies of the towns. He was no believer in popular right. He was a despot, but also a profound politician. His purpose, apparently, was merely to find some balance for the power of the barons and the bishops, and with this end in view, he recognized the political existence of the towns. Philip meant to be absolute master over all, but in creating this new political factor he had done a notable thing.

In 1313 the king issued an ordinance forbidding the nobles to coin money. So great was their reluctance to surrender this feudal privilege that they organized a conspiracy against him and it was in the midst of this serious crisis that he died. Some authorities say he died of a lingering disease, wasting away from some unnamed malady; others say he met his death from the tusks of a wild boar which he was hunting.

The nobles and the priests bore no love to Philip; he had curbed both orders with an iron hand; and it may be that his character has been made more odious than justice demanded. That he was hard, cruel, and despotic seems

undeniable; but it is equally true that modern France begins with him, and that the germs of civil order and regal strength rapidly developed during his reign.

He successfully reasserted the supremacy of the central power of the State over the federated feudal lord and the usurpations of the papacy; he not only maintained the national currency of St. Louis, but forbade the various local currencies; he forbade private wars and judicial combats; he organized the royal court in three branches, the Parliament, which was the supreme judicial tribunal, the Chamber of Accounts, which was the exchequer, and the Grand Council, which was political. Thus we have the first outline of orderly administration according to modern ideas, the different powers of government being distributed among different departments — the king, of course, dominating all.

It was Philip who created frontier custom-houses, at which customs duties were collected on exports.

Despotic as he undoubtedly was, he is the first of the French kings who caused himself to be addressed in behalf "of the French people," and still more remarkable are the words of the ordinance in which he confirms the granting of freedom to the serfs of the Valois: —

"Seeing that every human creature who is made in the image of our Lord ought to be free by natural right, and that in no country this natural liberty should be so destroyed by the hateful yoke of servitude," etc.

This language was new to the feudal lords, and to them it no doubt seemed that Philip was about to become a social and political incendiary.

In proclaiming the natural freedom of men and the hatefulness of servitude, Philip was putting a destructive

engine under the very corner-stone of feudalism. No wonder the barons conspired, less on account of the coinage ordinance, than upon this vital question of abolishing slavery.

It is even hinted that the slow, mysterious malady of which he died was a subtle poison.

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CHAPTER XII

LOUIS X. TO CHARLES THE FAIR

Beginning of Freedom of Thought

(1314–1328)

THE three sons of Philip the Fair succeeded him in turn, their children being daughters, and women being excluded from the throne by the Salic Law of the Franks.

A.D. 1314 Louis the Quarrelsome reigned less than two years (1314–1316), but within that period much of his father's work was undone by the strong feudal reaction which took place.

The nobles hanged Marigny — the finance minister of Philip the Fair — on the charge of witchcraft, his offence being, in reality, that he was identified with the centralizing policy of the late king. The right of private war was restored to the barons, the right to establish courts, the removal of the royal judges, and the right to dispense with written pleadings. By this last expedient they expected to be able to dispense with lawyers.

Louis the Quarrelsome, who commenced his reign by strangling his wife, defrayed the expenses of his coronation with the treasures taken from Marigny, and died before his second wife could give birth to a child.

For four months the kingdom waited patiently, and then the queen was delivered of a boy, who died in

eight days. The crown then passed to Philip the Long, brother of Louis the Quarrelsome, to the exclusion of a daughter of the late king by his first marriage.

Philip the Long (1316–1322) three times convoked the States General, renewed the exclusion of Churchmen from Parliament, instituted the Council of State, and endeavoured to establish a uniform system of currency and of weights and measures. The jurisdiction of the Chamber of Accounts was extended, the royal domains declared inalienable, and titles of nobility conferred upon commoners, — a practice which had originated under Philip III. By introducing this new element into the feudal aristocracy, it was made more dependent on the crown, its power was disassociated from the monopoly of the ownership of land, and its exclusiveness as a military caste invaded. A.D. 1316

At the same time that royalty dealt feudalism this blow from above, it encouraged the commons to deal it another from below. The people were given the right of military organization. In the towns, therefore, was erected a legal military barrier to the aggressions of the feudal lords.

In this reign the power of Parliament had become sufficiently established to bring to trial and execution one of the highest of the nobles, whose wife was niece to the Pope, and whose relatives were among the most powerful barons in France. This feudal chief, Jordan de Lille, felt his own importance so deeply that he struck dead the royal officer who had summoned him to court. Summoned again, he scornfully went, surrounded by a brilliant cavalcade of nobles, and thinking to browbeat the prosecution into retreat. To his profound surprise, he

found the royal power and the magic of the law amply sufficient to drag him to jail, to prove his repeated crimes, and to put him to death ignominiously on the gallows. This incident seems to deserve more attention than it has usually received. It distinctly emphasizes the commencement of a new order of things and a passing away of the old.

A.D. 1322 Charles the Fair succeeded his brother in 1322, reigned less than six years, and left no record which invites special attention.

Thus ended the line of Philip the Fair, and the crown passed to Philip of Valois, son of Charles of Anjou, Philip the Fair's brother.

Following the example of his father, Louis the Quarrelsome had encouraged the emancipation of the serfs. By ordinance he declared that "according to the law of nature, every man should be born free," and he therefore, with royal inconsistency, fixed a scale of prices at which the serfs on his own domains might purchase this natural right of freedom.

The king went still further; he virtually compelled all serfs who owned property to buy their liberty, by threatening to take all their goods for taxes unless they bought their freedom. The historian Michelet asserts that this legislation failed because the serfs would not accept the opportunity offered them. This may be true, but the overwhelming presumption is to the contrary. Why should the kings legislate on this subject, from reign to reign, if the laws were dead letters? And why should not the serf wish to buy freedom if he could? That there were serfs who had got together a little property, is shown by the king's threat to take it for

taxes. The French peasant has ever been a secretive, miserly toiler, and his appearance of abject poverty has often been made a necessity by the cruelty of the laws against him; but this apparent squalor is not always inconsistent with the supposition that he has hidden a little handful of coin in some nook or cranny of his hut.

In these reforms, we see the first glimmerings of the dawn of a brighter era. The Dark Ages are gone, and men's minds are awake. The birth-pangs of modern civilization are being suffered in France, as in other lands. The reign of law and order is about to commence. The civil power is rising above the military, the State above the Church. The merchant is becoming a man of political influence; the importance of commerce begins to be felt. The age of gold is about to supersede the age of iron, the thirst for wealth to extinguish the thirst for warlike renown. The Third Estate has been formed, and while the breath of political life has not yet been breathed into it, the mere fact that the king has virtually threatened the nobles with this new power in the body politic, is profoundly significant.

Peasants may not be purchasing their freedom very rapidly, but the king has spoken words on the subject of human slavery which cannot but be revolutionary in their tendency. When the monarch says that serfdom is a violation of the law of nature, and offers reasonable terms upon which freedom may be had, the principle has secured a recognition which in due time will lead to its triumph. The kings who proclaimed that "all men are by nature free," died early and mysteriously; their memories have been blackened by monkish historians; it was

an age when subtle poisoning was practised as a fine art; and it is vaguely hinted that these royal pioneers of political reform met their death at the hands of those whose privileges were endangered.

But while the era in question was marked by the innovations already mentioned, it must not be supposed that barbarism was extinct, or that ignorance and superstition had been overcome. On the contrary, some of the blackest trails of the Dark Ages were still to be seen. Miracles were still believed to be of daily occurrence, sorcery was a common crime, visions still haunted the eyes of the superstitious, and voices from the other world were heard by the benighted pilgrims of this.

Astrology was a regular study. Mild and studious lunatics sought to discover the fortunes of the individual man by reading the stars. The "science" was developed in the most laborious and systematic way, and the whole thing was proven by maps, charts, diagrams, and signs.

Another study, to which immense energy and faith was given, was that of alchemy. A belief was held that there was a method by which baser metals might be turned into gold. The search for this secret process was commonly called seeking the philosopher's stone. Thousands of men gave their talents and their lives to this seductive craze. If they are to be credited, they came deliriously near to success, but they didn't quite reach it.

The burning of witches was as regular as the conviction of thieves. No accusation was more fatal to the accused, for none was more difficult to disprove. Eccentricities which now provoke an indulgent smile were then regarded as convincing proofs of communications with the devil. Many a bonfire was kindled round poor old men and

women whose solitary habits, mumbling soliloquies, queer mannerisms of talk, dress, and look, merely meant the vagaries of second childhood. When malicious persecutors had determined upon the ruin of some one who stood in their way, they rarely failed to resort to the terrible charge of witchcraft, and the man or woman who escaped it, when the faintest sort of evidence was produced, was fortunate.

The Flemish war of Louis the Quarrelsome, while producing no political results of importance, had been a ruinous drain upon the kingdom. The people in their misery became restless and hysterical. They ran away from their homes in great numbers, banded themselves together, and under the name of Shepherds went roving round the country, saying that they wanted to cross the seas and recover the Holy Land. Becoming hungry, they begged food; when it was refused, they took it. From this act of lawlessness others grew, until the troops had to be brought against them, and with merciless cruelty the Shepherd movement was put down.

The Jews, expelled by Philip the Fair, had quietly returned under Louis the Quarrelsome. They were allowed to recover their property if they could find it, and to collect the debts due them by giving the king two-thirds thereof. The nobles who owed money to the Jews found themselves most unpleasantly surprised. They had supposed that these old debts were settled by the simple process of banishing the creditors. Here, however, were the banished creditors recalled to France, and the king had actually become in some sort their partner.

Just at this time the report began to circulate that the Jews and the lepers had formed an unholy combination and had poisoned the wells. A leper woman was seen to

throw behind her a small bag tied with a string. Being opened, it was found to contain the head of a snake, the feet of a frog, and some woman's hair moistened with a black, stinking liquor. When this unlovely compound was thrown into the fire, it did not burn. Therefore it was clearly proven, to the mind of the judge, that the combination was a deadly poison. The people were immediately aroused, and they fell upon the Jews and lepers, and slaughtered them with the wild ferocity born of race-hatred, personal loathing, religious frenzy, and mysterious fear.

At Chinon they dug a huge trench, kindled a fire within it, and cast into this flaming pit the wretched Jews, men, women, and children, so that 160 perished in one awful day.

At Vitry forty Jews, being held in the royal prison and knowing they must die, determined to escape death at the hand of the uncircumcised, and they prevailed upon two of their own number to kill the others. Of the two thus left, one killed the other, and then the Christians killed the survivor.

The wicked king filled his coffers with the spoil of the victims of these massacres, and the nobles escaped the payment of their honest debts.

The feudal system was based upon two vital principles —primogeniture and the monopoly of land.

By the first, the entire power and wealth passed to the eldest son rather than to all the children jointly. The idea was to preserve the landed monopoly and the power it brought. Dividing the land would have meant the division of the power and the weakening of the system itself.

All aristocracies seek to preserve themselves in the same way, while all governments founded upon democracy recognize the dangers of monopoly of any sort, and seek to keep the wealth of the country wisely distributed.

This feudal system came to be hateful to the king and to the people. To the former because he was almost helpless among these powerful nobles, each of whom dwelt in royal style at his own castle, making his own money, his own laws, and his own wars, and giving to the monarch only nominal obedience.

To the people it was odious because of the pride, the cruelty, the grinding oppression of the noble, who seized their persons or their property whenever he saw fit, spending their earnings on his pleasures and their lives in his wars.

Therefore, when royalty determined to seize the reins of power more firmly, when the king resolved to compel the nobles to obey the central authority, the common people rallied with intense enthusiasm to the support of the throne. From this cause originated the affection which the French people so long entertained for their kings. They saw the case only from their own standpoint, and they believed that the monarch was acting from the most patriotic motives in freeing them from the yoke of the nobles.

Royal laws, courts, and coinage took the place of all others. The haughtiest noble was made to bow to the general law. Each grandee was made responsible for the conduct of his own domains. Police forces were established in the cities, and a standing army of mercenary troops made the king independent of the feudal levies.

In return for the help which the commons had given, the king encouraged and protected their commerce, their trades,

and their chartered privileges. He made each city and town subject to his will, it is true; but this was an advance over the condition in which they had been the prey to rapacious robbers, who swooped down from their castles and plundered them without mercy.

The kings saw how useful the strong arms of these peasants could be at a crisis, and their importance in the State steadily grew. So that when Philip the Fair, realizing the fact that the contest between himself and Pope Boniface was a death-grapple, summoned a general council of the kingdom, he not only called for the nobles and the clergy, but also "deputies from the good towns."

This was the first appearance of the commons at the general assembly of Frenchmen since the old times prior to Charlemagne.

The distress of the king was the opportunity of the people.

It is worth remembering that the Roman Empire was the rule of the town and the city. The country had no part in it. The rural citizen had no influence, and rural property was at a great disadvantage. City life, city law, and city property were everything.

Under the feudal system, the reverse was true. The country ruled the town. The chief, living in his castle, secure from attack and ready to make assault, was master of the towns.

To throw off this yoke the townsmen organized into secret societies, binding themselves by oath to common purposes and concert of action.

Each trade was a close corporation and a monopoly. The outsider could not exercise it. The corporation absorbed the individual.

Just as capital organized itself into a feudal tyranny, so labour organized itself into the tyranny of the guilds.

The individual man was at the mercy of all parties, unless he joined a corporation. Once on the inside, his corporation was bound to protect him.

This was a harsh system all round, but the organization of the higher orders made the organization of the lower orders a matter of self-preservation.

Many were the bloody contests the townsmen had to wage with the nobles. Victory changed sides with painful frequency. Many a nameless hero fought, in those dim ages, for the sacred rights of common humanity, and gave his life for the advancement of the people. To nerve those rude, unlettered townsmen to combine against the frowning castle and its haughty, mail-clad chieftain, required eloquence, perhaps, equal to that of Mirabeau, and courage like that of Cæsar.

If we were asked to trace back to its origin the liberties of modern France, we would certainly seek it among the unheralded heroes who first roused the town to resist the castle.

While the great body of the people were thus seeking power in the government of France, another principle, equally important, was struggling for recognition.

Liberty of thought was striving for existence.

The Albigenses differed from the Catholics. They thought it wrong to worship the cross itself. They thought it wrong for a sinner to buy prayers and forgiveness with money. They rejected infant baptism and the doctrine of purgatory. They claimed to be guided by the Bible alone, and they did not recognize the authority of the Pope.

Thus liberty of thought and conscience asserted itself.

As already related, the Pope made implacable war upon the "heretics," and the voice of the dissenter was hushed in swift and cruel death.

Liberty of conscience seemed a lost cause. But, through the inscrutable ways of God, it constantly made headway. The selfish interests of the kings compelled them to resist the claims and the pretensions of the Church. Their resistance was successful. The Church was routed and discredited.

The lesson was not lost. If a king could resist a Pope's decree and yet prosper, why not others?

Besides this, there were scandals in the Church itself which lowered its dignity and lessened its power. At one time three different men claimed to be the Pope. Each had his partisans and his scoffers, — those who accepted his claim to be the representative of Christ and those who rejected it. All Christendom was divided, and the spell of papal infallibility received a rude disturbance. A theological cannonade filled Europe with its harmless noise. Each Pope shelled the other two with curses, interdicts, and excommunications, under which followers of each claimant expected to see the other claimants wither away. Great was the marvel when it was gradually made apparent that nobody was going to wither, and that each claimant stubbornly declined to be annihilated.

Events like these compel people to think, in spite of themselves. Europe awoke as from a grewsome spell. The wand of the enchanter was broken by the wizard himself. The Popes, by fruitlessly cursing each other, demonstrated the harmless character of papal curses. It was

seen that their tremendous power arose entirely from the fears of the cursed.

Learning, too, was on the increase. Fifteen thousand students crowded the University of Paris. Every town and every monastery had its school. The spirit of inquiry was abroad, and while each scholar claimed to be orthodox, differences of opinion arose and great theological discussions commenced.

Pronounced heretics, those who openly rejected the authority of the Pope and the creed of the established Church, were burnt. Even Philip Augustus, who would take no part in the Albigensian crusade, allowed the Inquisition to burn his subjects for honest differences of opinion upon questions of faith.

Later on we shall see the spirit of independent thought break out again. We shall see it fight more stubbornly than it did in Languedoc. We shall see it again put down with horrible cruelty.

Then again we shall see it break forth to be put down no more forever. We shall see it blazing forth from Germany, illuminating France and the uttermost ends of the earth and the uttermost ages of man.

Not a single one of the liberties we enjoy was conceived in America. Each and every one of them was cradled in the Old World. These principles of civil liberty had all been sprung in Europe, and had for generations been forcing and fighting their way onward, — running the gauntlet of the centuries.

Wise men had conceived them, bold men had proclaimed them, brave men had fought for them, martyrs had died for them.

Failure came upon these principles time and again. No

reform ever sprang full-armed and irresistible from the head of any political Jove.

There is, and in the very nature of things must be, the time of infancy and weakness.

There is, and must be, the time of patient planning, of painful culture, and of gradual growth, before the harvest-field yellows with the ripened results.

The true heroes of our race are not those whose names blazon the march of great thought and great principles as they burst into final success. They lie in unmarked graves beneath the accumulated oblivion of bygone ages. Their brains cradled the daring thought at a time when it was treason. Their burning lips proclaimed it when the gibbet, or the dungeon, or the stake, was almost certain to be their doom.

Unrewarded by the praise of hopeful adherents, persecuted malignantly by the powers they accused of tyranny, followed to execution by the derision of those deluded serfs of king and Church whom they wished to free, the lot of the early reformers was one that called for divinest motives and sublimest courage.

That we enjoy any liberties which are worth the name is due, not alone to those whose names are amber-held in the poetry, the history, and the songs of the world, but to the heroic efforts, the unstinted self-sacrifice, the splendid devotion of the earlier martyrs who dreamed of the blessings we enjoy and died rather than be silent.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

PHILIP THE FORTUNATE AND JOHN THE GOOD

(1328–1364)

BEGINNING with personal disputes between grandees and kings, there now ensued a period of bloodshed, rapine, and chaotic lawlessness which halted the advancing lines of civilization, and drove them backward in a demoralization which seemed to be hopeless. A.D. 1328

In these wars the questions at stake were not those concerning the people at all. They involved merely the rival claims of individual grandees and individual kings. Having raised disputes which could only be settled by the sword, they called upon the people to come forth and do the fighting.

Cities were burnt and churches demolished; fields were devastated and castles sacked; commerce was paralyzed and agriculture ruined; Christianity mocked and education checked; men were butchered, children slain, and women outraged; the land was filled with woe, misery, and want; a mad revel of lust, greed, and brutality was let loose upon the helpless, unoffending citizens, — all because their lazy, arrogant, and vicious rulers could not live without quarrels.

Philip VI. was the next king of France. He is known

A.D. 1328 in the language of court flattery as Philip the Fortunate, and was one of the unluckiest scamps that ever lived.

By the wanton throwing of a spark into a powder-house, he caused an explosion which shook his throne to its foundations, and lit a fire which burned, now fiercely, now smoulderingly, for 100 years.

We have already seen that by the Salic Law of the Franks, female heirs were excluded from feudal inheritances. The reason was that women were not fitted to render the military service by which feudal tenures were held.

It so happened that the Count of Artois had lost his life serving Philip the Fair in the battle of Courtray, and that Matilda, daughter of the dead count, had married the Duke of Burgundy, and that the sons of Philip the Fair had married the daughter of this Matilda.

The son of the slain Count of Artois had died before him, but had left a son, Robert of Artois, who laid claim to the inheritance of his grandfather. Philip the Fair had decided that the fiefs must go to Matilda — from whom they would naturally descend to her daughters and so to the husbands of these daughters, Philip's own sons.

Now Robert of Artois could not for the life of him understand how the Salic Law could work so smoothly in one place and not in another. He regarded Philip's decision as a gross injustice, a despotic violation of accepted feudal law; and very many nobles agreed with him.

When Charles the Fair died, leaving daughters, Robert of Artois threw all his influence to the support of Philip of Valois, the next male heir, in the belief that a king who

owed his crown to the Salic Law would enforce it in favour of others.

To his infinite disgust he discovered that the new king had no such intention. He declined to overrule the decision already made in the case, unless some new evidence could be produced. In a moment of madness, Robert of Artois resorted to forgery to supply this evidence. A.D. 1331-1332

The clumsy fraud was discovered, an obscure agent in the transaction burnt, and Robert himself became a fugitive. Stripped of his vast inheritance, his name proscribed, his wife in prison, though sister to the king, himself hunted out of Brabant where he first sought shelter, this able man to whom Philip of Valois so much owed his own elevation, crossed over to England, vowing vengeance.

An Italian war once broke out over a miserable well-bucket, and 10,000 lives were lost; the commencement of the Hundred Years' War in which two kingdoms were impoverished and 1,000,000 men slain, was not more dignified. Comparatively speaking, it was a fight over a well-bucket.

The English throne was occupied by Edward III., whose mother, Isabella, the beautiful and bad, was a daughter of Philip the Fair. Edward, therefore, was the direct and lineal heir to the crown of France, if the female line could transmit fiefs.

The king of France had most unwisely decided at this critical juncture that women could inherit; hence Edward was entitled to Philip's crown. If the law applied to the case of Robert of Artois was good, then Isabella's son was rightful heir to his grandfather's throne. Philip of Valois had never thought of this, perhaps, when he was stripping

Artois of his inheritance, but Artois had, and he forthwith hied away to England to rouse Edward to action.

That monarch had already twice acknowledged the title of Philip of Valois, and done homage to him as king of France for his own possessions there. He was not even meditating any contest; it was Robert of Artois who put the notion into his head, fired his ambition, his cupidity, and his pride.

It is true that there were other motives which had influence with Edward: Philip had been giving aid to the Scotch, and the Flemings had turned to England for aid against their tyrannical count, who was supported by the king of France. Still, French and Scotch alliances were nothing new, and the Flemish wool-trade was not of itself a matter to involve two nations for several generations. The real pith of the contention was personal: the English kings wanted the French throne — and they came tremendously near getting it.

On the side of France was a king without ability of any conceivable sort, a feudal nobility split up into factions, a middle class unused to discipline, and a peasantry without incentive to patriotism.

On the side of England was a king of brilliant capacity, both political and military, a nobility united by a fever for renown, and a soldiery famous for their use of the bow and eager to gather booty in conquered territory.

A.D. 1340 The war began with a naval battle off Sluys, in which France lost ninety ships and 30,000 men. Nobody told Philip about it, and he only learned of it through a hint dropped by the court fool.

After languishing several years without other decisive engagements, the war was suspended by a truce.

Then, in 1341, hostilities recommenced in Brittany over another personal dispute. There were two claimants to the ducal throne, one supported by Philip, the other by Edward, and the case was carried to "trial by battle." Another truce was declared in 1343 which lasted till 1346. A.D. 1341

Philip provoked a renewal of the war by an act of treachery and barbarous revenge. He invited to a grand tournament at Paris certain Breton nobles who had taken sides against him in the late war in Brittany. Gayly bedight, these knights of high degree set off from their homes in Brittany, pennons flying, armour glancing in the sun, plumes dancing on gilded helms, pricking onward to the great city of Paris to joust before the king, and to win the smiles and favour of fair women and the generous applause of brave men.

With Olivier de Clisson at their head, this brilliant band of invited knights rides gallantly on through sunny France, confident and bold, with high hope in heart, with gay words on lip, admiring and admired, strong in the glow of ruddy life — riding to win honour in the lists, in jousts before the king.

They no sooner draw rein in Paris than a faithless king lays cruel hands upon them, drags them to foul dungeons, and without trial of any kind has their heads struck off — and thus comes to an end the joyous ride of the gallant knights invited by their king. The gory head of Clisson was sent to Nantes and nailed to one of the city gates.

Is it any wonder that the shame of this dastardly deed rang throughout Europe, and that Edward of England and all his chivalry should swear to take bloody revenge? Is it any wonder that Clisson's widow should stir heaven and earth for vengeance?

The war breaks out anew, and the people of two great nations are to suffer because of the personal crime of a king.

A.D. 1346 Landing in France with 32,000 men, Edward captured Caen (1346), and advanced up the Seine, came in sight of Paris, and burned St. Cloud.

Philip got together a huge, unwieldy army and marched against the English. They fell back and took position at Crécy. Those writers who fight battles in their libraries tell us that Philip should have surrounded Edward and starved him out. They tell us that in two days the English would have been so reduced by famine that they would have sued for peace. The present writer does not know so well about that. Edward might not have been willing to die like a starved rat. The valour which routed the French when they attacked the hill, would very probably have been sufficient to carry the English through the line of blockade at any point they decided to strike.

At all events, the battle of Crécy or Cressy was fought, and King Philip got a tremendous beating. Eleven princes, 1200 knights, and 30,000 soldiers were the losses on the side of France.

Philip had contributed powerfully to the English victory. He had sent his troops, wet, weary, and weak from a long march in the rain, into the battle without giving horse or man time to rest. He had become enraged with the Genoese mercenaries in his service, and had ordered his French troops to slay them. Thus at the very opening of the battle was seen a spectacle never before witnessed in war, — different portions of one of the armies fighting among themselves. Of course such folly made the English task easy. All they had to do

was to shoot. The helpless mass of the French could offer no effectual resistance. Philip fought bravely enough, it was the limit of his capacity; the nobles died with useless heroism, for French nobles have never lacked courage; and blind old John, king of Bohemia, was led far into the fight by his brothers-in-arms, bridles tied to bridles, that the brave old warrior might meet a soldier's death. But nothing availed. Steady English courage, terrible longbows, and still more fearful bombards won the day.

These bombards were small cannon, made of wooden staves, clamped by iron bands, and loaded with gunpowder and stones, or iron balls. The battle of Cressy was the first in which artillery was used.

In another respect, the victory of the English was decisive. It marks the beginning of the superiority of infantry over cavalry. The utter uselessness of mail-clad knights and mail-clad horses, from a military point of view, as against well-armed foot-soldiers, was thoroughly demonstrated. Consequently the importance of the knights declined and that of the foot-soldiers rose. The nobles were losing France with their broils and their want of military ability; the common people must save it with their infantry and their patriotic unanimity. Calais fell (1347) into the hands of Edward after a memorable siege, and he drove out all the inhabitants, and repeopled the city with English. A.D. 1347

Pope Clement VI. now interposed as peacemaker, and a truce was signed.

France was in a state of misery and despair. Her defenders were inefficient, her king heedless, rash, and violent; her common people afflicted by new taxes and the

marauding habits of the soldiers of both armies. To deepen the general gloom came the Black Death (1348). In many places the mortality was so great that out of twenty men only two survived. At Paris 500 died under it every day. At Narbonne 30,000 died; in Provence it swept off two-thirds of the inhabitants; in several districts only one-tenth remained.

A.D. 1348

A swelling would suddenly appear in the groin or under the armpits; it was an infallible sign of death.

Terror took possession of the people. The dead were left unburied, the sick unnursed. Fathers fled from plague-stricken sons, sons from fathers, husbands from wives. The priests themselves fled — nature asserting itself over all.

The monks fled, but not so the Sisters of Mercy. In Paris these holy women cast aside all fear of death, ministered to the sick, prayed with the dying, shrouded the dead, and as they themselves fell, one by one, other heroic Sisters caught up the sacred work of Christianity and carried it onward.

There being no other reasonable hypothesis upon which this pestilence could be accounted for, the Jews were convicted of it. They had, of a surety, been poisoning the wells again. Enraged mobs fell upon them in all places throughout France and Germany, and slew them without mercy.

This mad period gave birth to the Flagellants, — half-naked bands of frantic men and women who swept from town to town, wailing dismally, and scourging themselves cruelly with whips. These crazy people, inflicting penance on themselves for the sins of the world, were a reflection upon the Church; and the Church, not relishing

such boisterous criticism, condemned these imprudent critics, and hunted them to their death.

Philip the Fortunate, who never won a fight and never had a piece of good luck in all his disastrous life, died in 1350, to the very great satisfaction of everybody. A.D. 1350

One of the very last acts of his shameful reign was his marrying the intended bride of his son. He had selected the girl himself and she had come to Paris to be his son's wife, but Philip was pleased with her looks to such an extent that he married her, and got his son to marry a widow who was somewhat ugly and a trifle old. This is perhaps the reason why the son was called John the Good.

By virtue of a decree dated March 20, 1343, the king established, for his own benefit, a monopoly of the sale of salt throughout the kingdom of France. Commissioners were appointed whose business it was to open stores, where every family was compelled to buy salt.

The government fixed the amount of the tax at its own pleasure. No one but the government was allowed to sell any salt whatever.

This monopoly was one of the most oppressive that any ruler ever fixed upon his people, and it was one of the prime causes of the French Revolution.

Philip the Fortunate was succeeded (1350) by his son John the Good, and the son was just about as good as the father had been fortunate. A.D. 1350

This John the Good began his reign by issuing an ordinance which authorized the nobles to suspend the payment of their private debts; and this act of repudiation was

followed by wholesale and fraudulent alterations of the currency which he attempted to conceal.

On suspicion, he brutally slew the constable, D'Eu, chief adviser of the late king. Imitating the folly of his father, he drove into frantic opposition the young king of Navarre, who was a grandson of Louis the Quarrelsome, by the marriage into the house of Navarre of a daughter of that king, and who was therefore the rightful heir to the throne of France, if the decision in the Robert of Artois case was good law.

Here is a strange state of affairs; the Valois kings are excluding the direct heirs from the throne of France by virtue of the Salic Law, and yet these very kings have been mad enough to set aside the Salic Law in so prominent a case as that of Robert of Artois.

Is it unnatural that the young king of Navarre should wish to ignore a law which the king himself ignores, when it suits his purpose to do so? Is it not the height of folly for the king of France to keep so grave a question open?

Losing sight of all prudence, John the Good strips Navarre of Champagne, and gives another of his counties to the new favourite, Charles of Spain, the false coiner of the king.

Navarre, driven to desperation, kills the favourite, and attempts the life of the king. He is thrown into prison and made to sue for pardon on his knees. Henceforth he is known in the chronicles of John the Good as Charles the Bad.

About this time, the nobles whom the king had relieved from debt-paying, began to claim pay for military service. The king concedes the demand, and thus the crown's financial necessities increase. To relieve them, the States

General are frequently convoked, and many reforms promised; thus the greed of the nobles indirectly builds up the popular element in the State, the Third Estate.

One of the reforms most urgently clamoured for was the abolition of the right of *prisage*. By this monstrous feudal usage, the servants of the king were authorized to go into the markets, the shops, the streets, and seize food, raiment, furniture,—anything that might be necessary to the personal service of the king and his family and his attendant lords. Of course, the servants would not have been human had they not also seized enough for themselves.

That such an abuse should exist, should be tolerated from reign to reign, is well-nigh incredible; but it is a fact nevertheless.

Philip, in 1346, had agreed to limit this right of prisage "to what would suffice for the maintenance of his house, of his dear companion the queen, and of his children."

Reforms were promised, but not made. Abuses continued and taxes increased. The States General demanded the right to see the royal accounts, scrutinize expenditures, and to decide on taxes. But, as evidence of its loyalty, the assembly voted a grant of 6,000,000 livres to equip an army of 30,000 infantry.

This sum was to be raised by two taxes, the one on salt, the other on sales of goods. These taxes were to fall upon prince and peasant alike. In consequence, the princes revolted.

The States General gave way, and repealed the taxes. In their place, an income tax of five per cent on the poor, and two per cent on the rich, was imposed. Even this tax was resisted by the nobles. They were bent upon maintain-

ing their exemptions from public burdens, at the same time that they put forward the demand for pay for military service.

Charles the Bad fed the flames of this feud, and John the Good pounced upon him at Rouen where Charles had been invited to a banquet by John's son. The banquet was going forward right merrily when in stepped the king of France, his face black with wrath. Armed men were at his back; the guests were at his mercy. But for the entreaties of his son, the king would have slain all these guests then and there. As it was, and because of his being John the Good, he only slew four of them, and flung the king of Navarre into prison.

Into this distracted land now came the English again — Edward III., and his still greater son, the Black Prince. They pillaged and plundered, they harried and hunted, they burned and demolished, they slew and they ravished, almost at their own free will. At one time they brought back into Bordeaux 5000 wagon-loads of spoil.

A.D. 1356 King John raised an army, encountered the enemy at Poitiers, and got as soundly beaten as his fortunate father had done at Cressy (1356). The French lost 11,000, the English 2500.

Among the prisoners was the king of France. This great imbecile was carried to England, was lodged royally in London, and had rather an easier time there than he had ever known in France.

During his captivity the utmost confusion existed in France. The oldest son of the captive monarch was at the head of the government, in appearance; but, in fact, the land was ruled by a cabal of powerful nobles. The taxes had grown so heavy, the coinage had been so re-

peatedly adulterated in order that the king might fleece the business men, that the merchants and common people in Paris rose in rebellion. They even broke into the room of the prince himself and murdered two of the wicked nobles who were responsible. The prince, who afterwards became Charles V., was spattered with the blood of the unfortunate victims, and was greatly frightened. The leader of the merchants, Marcel, assured him he was in no danger; but took off the cap the prince was wearing, and in lieu thereof put on his head the red and blue cap of the insurgents. A.D. 1358

The peasants also revolted, committed terrible excesses, and joined forces with the citizens of the towns in the effort to free themselves from the tyranny of the lords.

Marcel was successful for a time, but reaction set in; the aristocracy organized, the commons divided, as usual, and the reform movement was crushed with bloody severity. Entering into an alliance with Charles the Bad, Marcel lost his life at the hands of the indignant partisans of the dauphin Charles.

Several general assemblies of the aristocracy, the clergy, and the deputies from the towns, were held during these years and the people boldly demanded reforms of the most sweeping character. They insisted that no taxes should be levied without their consent, that the adulteration of the coinage should cease, that the prince should be assisted in governing the country by a council of leading citizens chosen by the general assembly, that the evil counsellors who had given the prince bad advice be dismissed, and that the general assembly should have the privilege of meeting twice a year to see to it that the laws were honestly enforced.

This was a reasonable scheme, looking to the good of all classes. Its main object was to put a limit upon the power of the king, and to give the mass of the people a hand in their own government.

Fair promises were made, but none of them were kept. The kings were nearly always ready with pretences that order should be restored, and unjust taxes removed, but the day of performance could not be reached.

King John the Good had himself given a handsome example of the way monarchs treat subjects.

Released from captivity upon certain conditions, he returned to France and at once made up lost time by levying a new tax upon all merchandise sold in France, or exported, a tax on salt, and a tax on wine. These devices not securing quite as much cash as he wished, he borrowed large sums, which were saddled on the tax-payers; and he sold to the Jews, for a high price, certain business privileges which were forbidden by law.

With the sums thus garnered in, this good king did not try to put down the bands of robbers who were pillaging the country from end to end, did not seek to alleviate the sufferings of the disabled soldiers who had lost limbs in his service, did not spend a cent upon the widows and orphans of those unfortunate peasants who had died on the march to the field.

He gathered up a glittering train of noble lords and ladies, a luminous assortment of libertines, swashbucklers, adventurers, and courtesans, and, going into the south of France, he spent six riotous months in feasts, festivities, and debaucheries. At the end of that season of revel and dissolute pleasures the money was all gone.

So the good King John, having spent the last franc he

could squeeze out of the French, left them to their squalor and wretchedness, chivalrously surrendered himself to the English because his son had broken the terms of the parol, and went back to the luxurious quarters which were provided for him in London. Here he fared sumptuously at the expense of the taxpayers of France.

Instead of the vaunted hospitality of which English historians boast, King John was charged for as a boarder at the rate of 10,000 reals per month, and every coin that was paid England for ransom, and for keep of this abominable king, was wrung from the wretched middle classes of France.

As a final stab at his afflicted country, this unspeakable John the Good ceded Burgundy to his son Philip; and this laid the foundation for infinite strife, bloodshed, and devastation in the years that were to come. As an architect of ruin, John the Good was a tremendous success. He died in the Savoy Palace, London, in 1364.

CHAPTER XIV

CHARLES THE FIFTH AND CHARLES THE SIXTH

Wars with England

(1364-1380)

CHARLES V., or the Wise, was twenty-seven years old when the death of John made him, in name as well as in fact, king of the unhappy realm.

A.D. 1364 France had been brought to the brink of destruction by two kings who were brave, extravagant, and heedless knights-errant; she was to be rescued by a coward who had run away from Poitiers, who never appeared in the lists, who could hardly lift a lance, who was miserly with his money, and who, instead of playing at knight-errantry, sat in a corner within the palace and spun the spider-webs of diplomacy.

Sickly and weak, fond of books and of seclusion, Charles the Wise gave no promise of fitness to deal with his perilous surroundings. Gradually it appeared that he had mastered the difficult case, and knew how to win it.

By the Treaty of Brétigny (1360) Edward III. had obtained a large portion of French territory, besides the ransom of King John, 3,000,000 gold crowns; but the troubles in Brittany and the feud with Charles the Bad yet existed. Bands of mercenary troops called the Free Companies raided the kingdom, held captives for ransom, plundered travellers, and pillaged towns. Some of

the leaders of these robber bands took possession of cities and ruled them as feudal lords, exacting tribute and living in royal state. Merchants travelling from one part of the country to the other were compelled to buy passes. A merchant without a pass was legitimate prey and was plundered without mercy.

Thus the feeble-bodied king was confronted by troubles internal and external, the English, the Free Companies, and the Navarre feud.

A stalwart figure moves slowly to the front amid the changing fortunes of civil war, and becomes at length the hope and hero of France. It is Bertrand du Guesclin. Never was there a knight more bold, more valiant, more magnetic, more true to king and country. Sprung from a good family in Brittany, but unloved of his parents because of his ugliness and his combative nature, he had at an early age broken away from home, and become a free-lance in the civil wars.

Of moderate height, dark complexion, flat nose, green eyes, broad shoulders, long arms, and small hands, Du Guesclin was no perfumed dandy of court festivities. He was a rough and ready fighter, full of daring, of resource, of stratagem, and of bulldog tenacity.

It was not by any sudden bound that he won fame. For many years his reputation was entirely local and his deeds of daring confined to petty skirmishes and individual combats. He was as ready, at the beginning of his career, to risk his life in hand-to-hand fights, as he was afterwards careful, as general-in-chief, not to do so. The leader who could in after years wisely reprove the Duke of Bourbon for risking himself like a common soldier, was in his earlier days the rashest of knights, eager for a

life-and-death tilt with any champion England could put forward. Before he had proven his ability to beat his enemies collectively, he had demonstrated, to their entire satisfaction, his ability to do it individually. Challenger after challenger went down in the dust before this fearless and powerful Breton.

Tender-hearted as a woman, open-handed as a prince, free and easy as hail-fellow-well-met, he was the idol of the French, without being personally hated by the English.

"Take off your helmet, Bertram, and let me kiss you," said his aunt, tearfully, one day when he was about to leave Rennes and go forth to meet single-handed the champion of the English, Sir William Blanchbourg, who had defied him to mortal combat.

The good aunt thought he would never come home alive, and wanted one last, lingering, sentimental, fare-well-world kiss.

Not so Bertram. He was wasting no time thinking about his failure. He fully intended that the other man should be the subject of the tears and the lamentations.

"Let me kiss you, Bertram," sobs the good aunt, with a genuine look of sorrow on her wrinkled face.

"Bah," says Bertram, with a grunt of disdain, good-natured but emphatic; "go home and kiss your husband, and get dinner ready by the time I get back; by God's help I mean to return before the fire is lit."

A flash like this shows us better than pages of description what sort of spirit buoyed the dauntless soldier. He rode forth that day, gallantly downed the Englishman, and was back to dinner on time.

Finally, after many years of constant activity, in which he had signalized his courage and his capacity, his name

reached the ears of the king. Charles had the rare faculty of judging other men correctly. He was not able to do great deeds himself, but he was gifted with the power to select those who could. He knew a superior man when he saw him.

Du Guesclin had at last caught the eye of the watchful monarch, and henceforth his career had all France for its stage.

He was commissioned to deal with Navarre, who was still making trouble, aided by the English.

At Cocherel (1364), Du Guesclin defeated these combined forces, and inspired his countrymen with the first victory the French had won against the English in the open field. This victory brought Charles the Bad to terms, and thus one source of danger was removed. Defeated by Chandos, at the battle of Auray (1364), Du Guesclin is captured.

The king has need of him, and pays his ransom; and again the stout warrior is ready for work. The task at which he is set is that of ridding France of the Free Companies. He sets about it with cheerful promptness; invites the captains of these pestiferous robbers to a conference; proposes a grand pillaging expedition against Castile, and accepts the position of commander-in-chief of the enterprise. The route of these marauders led them by Avignon, where the Pope then lived, and their approach alarmed the Holy Father. A cardinal is sent to inquire of Du Guesclin what it all means. That worthy soldier, being a good Christian and not devoid of humour, replies gravely that he is out on a crusade against the Moors of Spain, and that he and his companions, being sinful men, thought it most proper to call and see his

A.D. 1366

Holiness, and ask absolution for their sins. Furthermore, as they were engaged against infidels, and would need money for travelling expenses, they had thought of asking the Pope for 200,000 florins to aid them in their pious designs.

No remonstrance or compromise availing, the Holy Father grants both the money and the absolution. Having committed this preliminary robbery, and obtained forgiveness for it, Du Guesclin leads his army onward into Castile, where two brothers are disputing the throne, and each calling the other bastard. Peter the Cruel is in possession, Henry of Trastamare is claimant. Du Guesclin's army catches Pedro unprepared, and he runs away, like a man of sound judgment. Henry of Trastamare takes possession.

But Pedro has gone to the Black Prince, who is living and ruling in Bordeaux, near by, and demands aid of England. In high, chivalric fashion this help is asked; one knight, cruelly disinherited, imploring assistance from another. Incidentally, Pedro mentions that he will cede to the English the whole province of Biscay, and pay them 600,000 florins in gold.

Bugles blare, war steeds neigh, armour clashes and clangs, and off go the Black Prince and his mail-clad warriors, in all the glory of chivalric zeal, to put Pedro back on his throne. Over the Pyrenees they stream, and
A.D. 1367 make for the Ebro. Du Guesclin cautions Henry, tells him to wait and starve the English out. Henry will not wait; insists on fighting, fights, and gets ruinously beaten. Du Guesclin is again a prisoner: Henry a fugitive, Pedro a king, and the Black Prince the paragon of all romantic heroes.

But he wants his money, nevertheless; and he mentions the matter to Pedro. The restored king feels strong again, and makes difficulties about payment. The money cannot be had. The English troops clamour for pay. Chivalric ardour is good, but one cannot live upon it permanently. Pedro pays nothing, and the Black Prince retires from Castile deeply disgusted and annoyingly short of money. To get needed funds, what shall he do but tax his good people of Gascony? Consequently they are asked to pay a certain sum for every hearth in all the province. Immense indignation takes possession of these Gascons, and they not only refuse to pay the hearth-tax, but they appeal directly to King Charles at Paris, who is nominally the feudal suzerain of the province.

This studious observer of events believes the English are growing weak enough to be assailed, and he encourages the Gascon rebellion. As feudal lord of that province, he summons the Black Prince to Paris to answer upon the matter of the hearth-tax.

"I will go," says the English prince, "but it will be with helmet on head and 60,000 men at my back." A.D. 1369

Such being the signs of the times, Du Guesclin is not the man to remain in prison. He is ransomed again, at a huge sum fixed by himself. "Where will you get all this money?" asks the Black Prince.

"If Henry of Trastamare and the king of France will not pay it," says Du Guesclin, "there is not a spinster in France who can twist a thread that will not aid me."

The ransom was readily raised among Du Guesclin's friends, even John Chandos, the English general, offering to lend him part of the money.

Going back to Castile, with a sufficient force made up

A.D. 1369 of the Free Companies, he gives battle to Pedro, and defeats him at Montiel. A few nights afterwards, Pedro is captured as he attempts to steal through Du Guesclin's lines out of the castle of Montiel. He is carried to Du Guesclin's tent, and in comes Henry of Trastamare, his brother — his deadliest foe.

"Where is this son of a Jewish wanton who calls himself king of Castile?" cries Henry, as he enters the tent.

Pedro steps forward and, "Why, thou art the son of a wanton and I am the son of Alphonso," answered he.

They clinch, struggle, fall — Henry underneath. Pedro reaches for his dagger. A friend of Henry's catches Pedro by the legs, and turns him; and now Henry is on top. Out comes his poniard, and into Pedro it goes; and he dies, and his brother reigns peaceably ever afterwards.

In this circuitous manner, Du Guesclin has settled two of the vexed questions of the hour: Navarre is now the ally of France, and the Free Companies have found homes in Castile; in fact, the greater number of them have found homes so permanent that only Gabriel's trumpet will ever move them out again.

One vexed question still remains, — the English occupation.

But Charles is ready; Edward is not. Charles has money, a good general, youth, and a united nation at his back. Emboldened by the strength of his position, he insultingly defies King Edward, sending him a challenge by a kitchen-serving lad.

Edward is old, and has fallen upon evil ways. His glory was great, but he has tarnished it. He has sunk into debauchery; he is the slave of a lewd woman; honour is his no more. He has repudiated his debts, and ruined

those who trusted him. One of his sons is dead; another, the Black Prince, is dying. It is the time of the sere and yellow leaf with Edward, and his foes know it.

While Edward has been carousing, and his son has been stirring up troubles for himself in his French dominions, Charles the Wise has been husbanding his resources, making friends, and mustering troops. He has cultivated the Church with demure assiduity; has walked barefooted in processions; has remembered the Pope with goodly gifts, and the priests have begun to preach for him. The Free Companies are bought over, bishops open the gates of their cities, castles begin mysteriously to give themselves to the French; and the Black Prince, to his profound surprise, discovers that the entire English position is undermined. Even Limoges turned French, A.D. 1370 led over by her bishops. In unbounded wrath the Black Prince roused himself, rushed upon the recreant city, stormed it, took it, sacked it, and slaughtered its people, — three thousand men, women, and children in one black day of blood and sin.

That was the last triumph in France, or elsewhere. He dragged his worn-out frame to London, and soon died — a true type of the Norman knight, proud, overbearing, brave, capable, and pitiless to those who were out of his class.

The tide of French success rolled steadily on. Town after town came back to French allegiance. The English forces could do nothing. The French had orders not to fight pitched battles; the Fabian policy was winning its way; all that was needed was patience, vigilance, and time.

John Chandos, the great English captain, threw away

his life in a wretched night-raid, and the English were thus bereft of the renowned leaders who had led them to such marvellous victories.

Du Guesclin, made constable of France, becomes general-in-chief of all her forces. He could "neither read, write, nor cipher"; but he knew how to win his way against the English, and so the king put the realm in his hands.

Henry of Trastamare, grateful for the French aid which had put him on the throne of Castile, and, alarmed at English encroachments in his direction, sent his fleet to
A.D. help the French. Off Rochelle, the Spanish fleet defeated
1372 the English, and sank their ships. This event threw Poitou back into French hands; Brittany soon followed.

A.D. Another English army comes over, finds no foe in the
1373 open field, marches clear across the ruined country, suffers greatly on the march, and when this force, which had left Calais with 30,000 horses, reached Bordeaux, it was on foot.

Even the Gascons then turned to France, and the English were reduced to three places, — Calais, Bayonne, and Bordeaux (1380).

Charles the Wise now unwisely enbroiled himself with the Bretons. The duchy was semi-independent, and in all local affairs was wholly so. Charles tried to seize it and reduce it to a royal province. The Bretons flew to arms, and Charles was driven out.

Du Guesclin himself was a Breton, and thousands of his countrymen had been fighting the battles of France
A.D. all these years. The old soldier could not follow the
1380 king in this ungrateful war, and he gave back his sword of constable.

Nevertheless, he went to besiege, in the castle of Randon, a band of marauders who had been plundering the surrounding country. Here he fell sick and died (1380). The castle surrendered next day, and the keys were laid upon Du Guesclin's bier, the captain of the besieged having vowed to surrender to no one less than the dead hero.

For hero he was, the Wallace of his country, the national champion at whose magnetic touch sleeping courage sprang into life, and a great nation, shaking off its fear and its feuds, redeemed itself from foreign rule.

Most fitting was it for the king to ask that this loyal soldier be buried by his own side. Even in death the weak felt the need of the strong. Within a few months the monarch followed the subject; and by the side of him who had worn the crown slept the dauntless warrior who had restored it.

Charles the Wise died in September, 1380, after having abolished every tax not authorized by the national assembly. He had amassed a treasure of seventeen million livres — great for that day — had collected a library of nine hundred and ten volumes, which became the nucleus of the national library; and had commenced the building of the Bastille, the fortress prison so ominously identified with French history. A.D. 1380

For all his wisdom, Charles was a firm believer in astrology, and a state astrologer was one of the honoured and salaried officials of his administration. It was this man's sworn duty to tell the king what was going to happen, so that the king might take measures to keep it from happening. The daughter of the state astrologer became the historian of Charles' reign: her name was Christine de Pisan.

A.D. 1380 Charles the Wise was succeeded by his son Charles VI., who at the time of his father's death was not twelve years old. He had four uncles, and no one of them was good.

The oldest of these uncles, the Duke of Anjou, was hidden in the adjoining room while his brother the king was dying; and when the monarch had breathed his last, Anjou stepped into the room and laid hands upon the crown jewels, the gold and silverware, and demanded to know where the treasure of the dead king was secreted.

The treasurer said he had sworn not to tell. Anjou sent for the headsman and said, pointing to the treasurer, "Cut that man's head off." The treasurer told where the money was hid, and Anjou took it.

By reason of his seniority, Anjou claimed the regency, and his right was acknowledged. For nearly two years he was engaged in levying illegal taxes for the purpose of extorting money enough to lead an army into Italy, in support of his pretensions to the throne of Naples. These tax levies provoked riots and bloodshed; but eventually the necessary funds were raised, and Anjou set off on his campaign; but once arrived in Italy, his army wasted away and perished ignobly, and so did he.

Not only did the towns resist Anjou's greedy demands, but the peasants, maddened by so many generations of wrong, rose in revolt, made war on the rich, and committed dreadful outrages. They burned châteaux, violated the wives and daughters of the nobles, and roasted the lords themselves at the stake. They were frenzied in their rage against the nobility as a class, and wanted to exterminate it. All whose hands were not hardened by toil were slain.

The higher classes rallied their forces, and the steel-

clad knights, armed with lance and sword, found no difficulty in butchering the ragged, unarmed wretches, and putting down the revolt.

After Anjou had gone, the Dukes of Burgundy and Berry, who were also the king's uncles, took charge of their nephew and of his kingdom.

The Flemings having risen against their French count, because of his violation of their liberties, the young king of France, at the head of a large army, was marched by his uncles into Flanders (1382), and won the battle of Roosebeke. That is to say, he looked on from a distance, while his troops cut down the Flemings, who had packed themselves in such close array that they could neither run nor fight. The towns of Flanders were then pillaged and burnt. The city of Courtray was utterly destroyed, and its inhabitants massacred, for no other cause than that the French had suffered a defeat there many years before. A.D. 1382

The young king then marched back to Paris, where the citizens were still in a half-rebellious state, resulting from the illegal exactions of the Duke of Anjou. Great was the fear in the capital as the victorious army returned. The royal uncles set to work immediately to inaugurate a reign of terror. Scaffolds and stakes were made ready, and hundreds of the leading citizens sent to their death. Sweeping confiscations were made, ruinous fines imposed —all to the profit of the royal uncles.

The war in Flanders had not been ended; heroic resistance was being made to French aggression, and, in the end, it was partially successful. The Count of Flanders was stabbed to death by the Duke of Berry, and peace with the Flemings followed. The Duke of Burgundy, the royal uncle, reaped all the benefits of war.

During the course of this year (1384) war again broke out between France and England. A French army was sent into Scotland, and immense preparations were made to invade England itself. Delays occurred, adverse winds set in, the opportunity passed, and the enterprise was abandoned, after it had cost 3,000,000 livres. The army sent to aid the Scotch was defeated.

The young king was exhausting himself, mentally and physically, in a perpetual round of feastings, tournaments, revelries, and gallantries. Money was poured out like water on frivolities and sensualities. At the age of sixteen his uncles wedded him to Isabella of Bavaria, aged fourteen, — a fatal marriage.

The royal uncles were adding enormously to their own wealth of power, but the kingdom was going to the dogs. Justice was not administered, the finances were plundered, public security was wanting, public works neglected and unrepaired, and robbers infested the highways.

A.D. 1388 The cardinal of Laon boldly advised the king to assume the reins of government. The advice was accepted; the king notified his uncles that he would henceforth govern alone, and the cardinal of Laon died suddenly, under strong suspicion of poison administered at the instance of the royal uncles.

The king called back to the royal councils the old ministers of his father, chief of whom was Olivier de Clisson. Reforms were at once effected. Dishonest officials were dismissed, taxes were lowered, order restored, and justice administered.

These counsellors were men of humble birth, new men whom Charles the Wise had selected on account of their natural talents and worth. The nobles despised these

new men, these "Marmousets," and hated them with a rancorous hatred. The young king embarrassed them cruelly by his giddy extravagance, his perpetual and unlimited demands upon the treasury. Taxes soon had to be raised again. Feasts, tournaments, masquerades, balls, bacchanalian revels, followed each other in swift succession. Growing weary of Paris, the king and his licentious companions made a tour of the provinces, and, in each city where they stopped, they indulged in the wildest dissipation. He returned to Paris worn out in body and mind, old at twenty-two.

The royal uncles, in 1392, determined to put an end to the Marmouset government. Clisson was set upon by their hired assassins, and left for dead in the streets of Paris.

The king was intensely excited and indignant, and he swore to bring the chief assassin, Peter de Craon, to punishment.

This man fled to Brittany, whose duke refused to deliver him up. Charles assembled an army, and in spite of the obstacles thrown in his way by his uncles set out for Brittany.

In passing through the forest of Le Mans, a man, clothed in white, rushed out, seized the king's bridle, and cried, "Stop, noble king, thou art betrayed." The man was put aside; but he followed for some time, crying his weird warning, "Thou art betrayed." A.D. 1392

It was very hot, and all felt the effects of the heat; a page, carrying the king's lance, nodded in his saddle, and the lance clashed against a helmet with a loud noise.

"Down with the traitors," cried the king, drawing his sword and rushing upon his escort. He killed four men before they could stop him. He had gone mad.

The dukes again seized upon the government; banished Clisson, threw the other Marmousets into the Bastille, and signed a truce of twenty-eight years with the English. For twenty-eight years Charles VI. continued to live, nominally the king of France, but really a lunatic, with lucid intervals, in the hands of keepers.

His wife lost all love for him, his uncles made a mere political puppet of him, and his people rarely ever saw him. When he was not actually mad, his reason was not capable of taking in all his surroundings; and those who managed him drew him from one extreme to the other. While the madness was on him, he was a lunatic, pure and simple. His food was put into his cell, where he fell upon it like a starved dog. Filth, vermin, ulcers, accumulated upon his poor body, until it was hideously foul. It required six or eight men to catch him, hold him, wash him, reclothe him; and this was done at periods far apart.

His heartless wife quit him entirely, and they hired a poor girl, Odette, to stay with him as his wife. She was well paid, and there was a daughter born of this most detestable arrangement. The queen, in the meanwhile, pursued her pleasures, which were of many different sorts, one of them being a criminal relation with her husband's brother, the Duke of Orleans.

The Marmousets having been ousted by the nobles, nothing was more natural than that the nobles should quarrel among themselves. In the contest for control of the mad king, two great parties appeared: Orleans at the head of the one, and Burgundy of the other.

France was, alternately, the prey of these ferocious factions; and the mad king was seized and controlled, first

by one, and then by the other. As to the people, their condition was ever the same: they were plundered impartially and unmercifully by both.

Sigismond, king of Hungary, being hard pressed by the Turks, besought the aid of France, and a gallant army headed by Burgundy's son, the Count of Nevers, goes eastward to render chivalric aid. The Turks, brutally disregardful of chivalric considerations, overpower these gallant knights-errant at the battle of Nicopolis; and, many prisoners having been taken, the Sultan Bajazet has 10,000 heads chopped off by way of permanent warning to European chivalry. A.D. 1396

The Count of Nevers and some others were reserved for ransom, and the common people of France were made to pay the cost of getting these chivalrous hotheads home again. The amount the people of Burgundy had to raise to release Nevers was 200,000 crowns. We shall presently see that the money was not well invested.

The Duke of Burgundy died in 1404, and the king's brother, the Duke of Orleans, became absolute master of the kingdom. A.D. 1404

He broke the truce with the English; imposed enormous taxes which he shared with Queen Isabella, his paramour, and the right of *prisage* was mercilessly enforced. Not only were the markets invaded by the agents of the nobles, and violent hands laid upon clothes, provisions, and furniture, but the very cottages and hospitals were laid under contribution. This abuse became so intolerable that universal rebellion was on the point of breaking out, and the nobles only pacified the people by suspending the right for four years. The money wrung from the commons was spent by the nobles in riotous living.

The Count of Nevers, now Duke of Burgundy, determined to contend for the place of power his father had occupied, and he advanced into France from Flanders, at the head of an army.

Orleans and the queen retired to Melun; Burgundy took possession of Paris, where he made himself popular with the citizens.

A reconciliation was brought about between Orleans and Burgundy. They pledged mutual friendship, and took the sacrament together.

A.D. 1407 Not long afterwards, Burgundy caused Orleans to be murdered in the streets of Paris, at night (1407). After some hesitation and denial, Burgundy, John the Fearless, confessed the crime, justified it, and made ready to resist any attempt to punish it. No such attempt was made: royal authority was too weak. John the Fearless, after a brief sojourn in Burgundy, returned at the head of an army and took possession of Paris. He made his terms with the Church; and Jean Petit, a famous doctor of the Sorbonne, triumphantly demonstrated, in an address delivered in presence of the whole court, that the assassination of Orleans was a godly deed, inspired by the purest of motives, and demanded by the loftiest considerations, religious and political. Burgundy consented to go through the ceremony of asking pardon of the king for the murder of his brother, and the pardon was granted accordingly. The unhappy widow of Orleans and his orphan boys

A.D. 1409 were required to forgive the murder, and to sign a truce with him (1409).

Burgundy was now, in reality, the king of France, and he ruled with an eye single to the profit of Burgundy.

The young Duke of Orleans married the daughter of

the Count of Armagnac, and under the lead of this new chief the Orleans faction again appeared in arms. A fierce army of Gascons, under Armagnac, advanced upon Paris, and seized the surrounding country. Burgundy, A.D. 1410 holding on to the king's person, intrenched himself in the city. Civil war in its deadliest form ensued, and both factions called on England for aid.

Burgundy's mob raged in Paris, pillaging, burning, and butchering; Armagnac's mob raged outside Paris, pillaging, burning, and butchering. Poor France!

At last the better class of the citizens of Paris could A.D. 1412 stand it no longer, and they rose up and put down the mob.

Burgundy withdrew. Armagnac entered, accompanied A.D. 1413 and 1414 by the Orleans princes, and the king passed into their keeping. The Peace of Arras put an end to the civil war, but not to the disorders.

England was once again under the rule of a valiant king, Henry V., and the distracted condition of France tempted another English invasion (1415).

Landing near Harfleur, Henry V. took that place, after losing 15,000 men. Too weak to attempt further enterprises, he marched across the country, making for shelter in Calais. The French army was not content to let the English get away without further punishment, and they hurried forward to attack them. The battle of Agincourt A.D. 1415 was the result. The French were shamefully defeated, lost 10,000 men, and the English 1600. Among the prisoners were the constable, seven princes, and 120 lords. After beating the French in this signal manner, Henry resumed his retreat, marched to Calais, and returned to London.

A.D. 1418 Civil war again broke out in Paris (1418), and one of the factions massacred the other. Eighteen thousand anti-Burgundians were slaughtered in the streets, and the Duke of Burgundy, in company with Queen Isabella, reëntered the city in triumph.

The royal party, led by the dauphin, the king's oldest son, saw the necessity of coming to terms with Burgundy. Reconciliation was proposed, and he agreed. One meeting was had between him and the dauphin, and all passed off well. Another was to be had on the bridge of Montereau. Burgundy went to it; a dispute A.D. 1419 between him and the dauphin arose, and the duke was murdered by the dauphin's attendants.

The immediate result of this crime was to throw the Burgundians into the arms of the English. Queen Isabella and the partisans of the murdered duke immediately turned to Henry V., and that cold, calculating conqueror put his sickle into the harvest, and reaped all the fruits of the assassination.

A.D. 1420 In May, 1420, the Treaty of Troyes was signed, and Henry V. of England became the keeper of the royal lunatic, Charles VI., and virtual ruler of France.

Let us take a parting look, full of sympathy and compassion, upon this wretchedest of kings, Charles VI.

For twenty-six years the curse of madness has been upon him, the cloud lifting now and then, only to close down more hopelessly in the end. For twenty-six years he has been tossed back and forth among the keepers, who fought among themselves for the privilege of holding the king, and plundering the kingdom. Burgundy is keeper for a time, then Orleans, then Isabella, then the dauphin, then the king of England. Each by turns takes

possession of the madman, uses him, neglects him, despoils him, and pillages France in his royal name.

In his lucid moments he sees just enough of the state of the country to feel the chill of its horrors. He realizes the suffering, but cannot relieve it. He hears the call of distress, but is powerless to move. He looks, sympathizes, grieves, desponds — and is mad again.

There is something terrible and most pathetic in this picture. The figure of the king — old before his time, worn out by sensual indulgence, shrouded by madness, and thus flung from brightest sunshine into uttermost darkness — is appalling. He reigns, and yet does not reign. He is theoretically king, and yet he is a ragged, filthy, vermin-eaten lunatic, upon whom the keepers spring at intervals, in order that they may wash him clean, and put on a change of clothes. Food is thrown to him as to a wild beast. He is foul to eye and ear and nose. Yet he is king, and is the centre of all intrigue. The blackest passions rage around him; the barriers of morality are down; a mad whirl of jealous and greedy rivalry beats around the throne.

During all these sad years, famine and pestilence, war and rapine, have wasted the kingdom. Noble takes arms against noble, peasant against lord, middle class against upper, and English against all. The Oriflamme is beaten down in shameful defeat. Foreign invaders wreak their pleasure upon undefended France. The smoke of burning towns, which heralds the advance of the English, may be seen from the walls; yet the streets run red with the blood of Frenchmen, shed by Frenchmen. So many dead men lie along the streets that even the children grow familiar with the sight, and drag the corpses about in

play. To add to the gloom, the horrors of the time, an epidemic breaks out, and carries off 50,000 victims.

Towering above the abject form of the mad king, Charles VI., we see that of his guardian and keeper, Henry V.

What reader of English has not heard of the Prince Hal of Shakespeare, boon companion of Falstaff, guest of Dame Quickly, hero of scrapes about town and mock robberies on the highway, — the Henry of Monmouth "whose swift wrath beat down the never-daunted Percy"?

By what enormous labour has this Harry of Monmouth become the "hero king," the conqueror of a great realm beyond seas; by what drudgery and toil has he reared the fabric of military greatness; by what hardness of heart and cunning of mind has he knit together his vast webs of intrigue, keeping Frenchmen divided, and Englishmen united!

At last success crowns it all: he is, so far as eye can see, completely victorious. His word, curt and harsh, is law. His look, high and stern, compels obedience. His hand, quick and strong, strikes down all resistance.

He gathers into that iron clutch all the strands of power: Burgundy is his ally, Isabella his pensioner, the mad king his ward, and the mad king's daughter his wife.

What mortal ever mounted more rapidly the pinnacle of greatness? No wonder his head is turned, and he dreams dreams. He is to conquer in Germany, also, and perhaps in Spain: certainly in the East, — the dim, distant, opulent East, — whose vague grandeurs and limitless possibilities have turned so many heads, from Alexander to Napoleon.

The hero king sees a guarantee of the permanence of his conquest when his French wife bears him a son. Only one life, that of the mad king, stands between him and the crown. Henry is regent, actual king; but Charles is yet alive and, nominally, the monarch. But surely he cannot last much longer; he will die soon, and the hero king, Henry, waits indulgently for the poor old lunatic to shuffle out of his way.

But alas, a sudden cloud dims this sunny landscape, A.D. and the hero king must bend his crested head. Death 1422 calls; — for the lunatic? No; for the hero king.

And he must go, suddenly summoned as one bidden from a banquet of the gods, to be cast, naked and alone, into the freezing night of death and the grave.

Henry V. died August 31, 1422, and Charles VI. soon followed. He had occupied the throne forty-two years.

It is said that playing-cards were first invented in this reign to amuse the king in his hours of gloom.

One of the important events of this reign was the Council of Constance, called together by the Church to settle the disputes between the three popes, and to heal the great schism in the Church.

It sat four years; selected Martin V. as the true Pope; A.D. decided that the decree of the general council should be 1418 of superior authority to the Pope, and condemned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, the great forerunners of Martin Luther, to be burned at the stake.

CHAPTER XV

JOAN OF ARC AND CHARLES THE SEVENTH

WE are now familiar with the history of this hundred years' war between France and England. We have seen Edward III. beat down the French, sack their cities, and ravage their fields. We have seen the slaughter of French knights at Cressy and Poitiers and Agincourt. We have seen the terror of the English name grow upon the French to such an extent that one Englishman can overcome five Frenchmen in the open field.

We have seen Henry V. receive at the hands of the French king, queen, and nobles the succession to the throne of France.

We have seen demoralization, utter and ruinous, take possession of the wretched land.

We can see the people weeping at the death of the insane king, because he was not so destructive as the sane ones had been.

We can see bands of pillagers going from town to town, plundering and destroying.

In the dreadful orgy of lust and crime we can hear the stout chieftain, La Hire, affirm that "if God himself were a soldier, he would turn robber."

And in remembrance of this chaotic period we can hear the prayer of this same La Hire, as he girds on his armour for a pillaging expedition: —

"O God, do unto La Hire this day, what thou would'st have La Hire do unto thee, wert thou La Hire and he God."

A country boy saved Israel; and a country girl was to save France.

Joan of Arc was born January 6, 1412, in the little hamlet of Domremy, on the Meuse, in Lorraine. Her parents were simple, respectable people, owning some land. They were devout members of the Catholic Church, and devout believers in the divine right of kings.

Joan was brought up in the same faith. Her childhood was that of an ordinary French country girl of the time. She minded the sheep, or the spinning-wheel, or the pot, just as other girls did. She played, she danced, she decked the churches with flowers, just as the other children did.

She was not taught to write, nor to read; but she was taught to repeat the Catholic creed, the Hail Mary, and the legends of the saints.

As she grew older her fondness for the Church became noticeable. She would steal away from her playmates and carry wild flowers to deck the chapel. She became more pensive, more thoughtful, strangely stirred and pleased by the sound of the mellow church bells.

Wars and rumours of wars were all about her. The air was full of the clash of arms. The wounded soldier often stopped in for a night's shelter, for nourishment, and for nursing.

Once the alarm came that Domremy was to be pillaged, and the villagers had to flee for shelter.

Thus round the fireside at her father's house, Joan

was in full contact with the troubled times. She heard all the strange stories which were afloat, and the miseries of her country spoke to her every day.

She heard how a strange man had suddenly sprung out of the woods, caught the king's bridle, and cried, "O king! go no further; thou art betrayed," and had been beaten off by the attendants, and had still followed at a distance, crying, with a loud voice, "Thou art betrayed!"

They told her how the king had thereupon fallen into deep gloom as he rode on; and had then, at the accidental clash of a lance upon a helmet behind him, furiously drawn his sword and had cut and slashed and fought his friends until he had fallen exhausted — and then had gone mad, and was even now mad — he, the poor, insane king, whose wife was making war upon his son, ruining the land and delivering it over to its foes.

She heard them speak in the low tones of deep hatred against this false Queen Isabella, this shameful wife, this unnatural mother.

She heard them talk in awe and vague hope of the old prophecy of Merlin, that "France, lost by a woman, shall be saved by a woman."

Her wonder grew as she heard them tell that the woman who was to deliver France was to be a virgin and was to come from the marshes of Lorraine — her own country.

The heroines of the Bible aroused her imagination; the needs of her prostrate and bleeding country wrung her heart; the intense religious zeal within her turned her thoughts to God; and the unutterable yearning of all the people round her for Divine help, for Divine deliverance, fed the wishes, the hopes, the aspirations of this

pious, superstitious, imaginative girl until they burst into the holy flame of faith.

She believed that Merlin's prophecy applied to her. She believed that the heroines of the Bible were to live again in her. She believed that Voices, voices from on high, called on her to go forth and deliver France.

Alas! And the fate of the martyrs taught her their sad lesson, too. She felt that she should lose her own life in saving France.

Joan was sixteen years old when she confided her plans to her uncle and begged his help.

She wanted to be carried before the governor of a neighbouring town, Vaucouleurs, in order that he should provide her with means to go and see the king.

After much persuasion, the uncle consented.

He went with her to the governor.

"Send and tell the dauphin that the Lord will give him help before mid-Lent. In spite of his enemies he shall be king, and I myself shall lead him to be crowned."

Thus spoke Joan to the governor.

"Carry that girl home to her father and whip her well."

Thus spoke the governor to Joan, laughing.

She returned to Domremy, neither discouraged nor shaken in faith.

Her father dreamed that she had gone away to the wars with the soldiers. He was much disturbed and said to her brothers, "If I thought such a thing could happen, I would bid you drown her; and if you refused, I would drown her myself."

The father wished her to marry. A suitable match was offered her, and the lover was so eager that he even

sought the aid of the courts to force her consent; but without success.

She vowed to remain a virgin, and she was constant in her belief that heavenly Voices called her to the great work of saving France.

Again she went to her uncle, and again she gained through him access to the governor of Vaucouleurs.

He answered her as before, scoffingly.

"I must go to the dauphin," said Joan, "though I should journey on my knees."

Such strange talk as this got noised abroad, and many people came to see the girl, out of curiosity.

Among them was a knight, called John of Metz. So impressed was he by her intense earnestness, her evident purity and confidence, that he laid his hands within hers, in the old chivalrous fashion, and vowed that by God's help he would take her to the king.

Another knight, Bertrand de Poulengy, gave a like promise.

And now the wind begins to set in Joan's favour. Faith begets faith. The scoffing governor suddenly grows attentive and respectful. He brought a priest to see her with a view of learning whether the spirit that possessed her was good or evil. She received the holy man upon her bended knees, made a good impression upon him, and he reported favourably to the hesitating governor.

Still he doubted, and still he delayed.

For three weeks the poor girl was kept waiting, and during this weary interval, she lived with Catherine de Royer, helping her in household work, and spending much time at prayer in the chapel.

The people of Vaucouleurs now came forward as her

friends. They gave her a horse, and the equipments of a soldier.

Then came news of a battle in which the French had, as usual, been beaten.

"In God's name let me go," says Joan; and at last the governor consented.

He gave her a sword and a letter to the king.

With her two pledged knights and four armed men of lesser rank, she set out on February 23, 1429, to go to the king. A.D. 1429

She did not see her parents to bid them farewell, but she sent them a letter entreating their forgiveness.

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We have already seen that, after the Treaty of Troyes, Henry V. of England was in fact master of the French kingdom. Excepting three or four provinces which remained faithful to the dauphin, the son of the mad king, the English conqueror ruled all the land.

Both Henry V. and Charles VI. having died in 1422, the Treaty of Troyes was now to be put to the final test.

The infant son of the English king was proclaimed king of France, at Paris, and was recognized as such by the French Parliament, the University of Paris, Queen Isabella, the first prince of the blood, Philip of Burgundy, and by nearly all the provinces of the kingdom.

A few French knights in the south proclaimed the son of the French king, and the southern provinces recognized him as Charles VII.

Almost immediately he suffered two defeats in battle, and his cause was at such a low ebb that he wandered about from castle to castle, and was derisively called the king of Bourges.

He had not yet been crowned. His legitimacy was questioned. His finances were so low that the very scullions in his kitchen clamoured angrily for their unpaid wages.

Such was his distress that he had sold his jewellery and precious trinkets. Even his clothes showed poverty, and his bootmaker, not being paid the cash, refused to credit Charles for a new pair of boots.

His armies had been driven in everywhere, and now the English had laid siege to Orleans, "the key to the south." If Orleans fell, all was lost.

The English had taken the towns in the neighbourhood of Orleans, had driven in the outposts of the defenders, and had erected forts and bastions so as to surround the city and storm it into surrender.

Early in February, 1429, the besieged learned that a large supply of provisions was coming from Paris to the English. The knights of Orleans resolved to capture it. Accordingly, they made the attempt — sallied out of town, attacked the English, got handsomely whipped, and went in again.

France almost despaired of herself. The fall of Orleans seemed certain. The bishops fled, and thus the Church seemed to abandon the city to its doom. The Count of Clermont, one of its chief defenders, went away also, carrying his soldiers with him.

The frantic citizens sent to Charles for aid, but he could do nothing for them.

They had appealed to the Duke of Burgundy, but his only response was to become neutral.

Surrounded by the English, all supplies cut off, abandoned by the Church, forsaken by some of their allies, what hope was there for Orleans and France?

Borne by the swift feet of rumour came wonderful tidings to the stricken city. A virgin had arisen out of Lorraine, as was foretold by the ancient prophecies, and was even now on her way to see the king, and to undertake the deliverance of Orleans.

"The king and the Church have failed us, but God has heard our supplications!"

So heated had become the atmosphere because of constant strife, so excited the imaginations of men, so eager were the distressed people to catch at comfort, that the strong wine of confidence was doing its work in Orleans, even before Joan reached the king. We easily believe what we wish to believe.

Perilous was Joan's journey to Chinon, where Charles was holding his shabby little court, wearing his old shoes — the distrustful bootmaker having carried away the new ones.

Yet so hedged about is royalty with forms and ceremonies, that it was several days before Joan could gain admittance to this king, whose kingdom was slipping from under his shabbily shod feet.

Finally Joan is received.

In plain, earnest terms she states her mission.

"I am Joan the Virgin, sent by God to save France." She asked for troops that she might go and save Orleans.

Charles was much disposed to treat her as a visionary, but seeing the impression she had created, he hesitated. She was lodged with the king's lieutenant and treated well. Day after day she renewed her request for troops.

Finally it was decided to leave the question to the decision of Parliament at Poitiers. The archbishop of

Rheims summoned learned churchmen, doctors, and bishops, to deliberate upon Joan's proposed mission.

After full inquiry into her life and character, after hearing what she had to say, after viewing her clad as a male soldier, which was afterwards charged against her by the Church as a crime, the examiners sanctioned her mission, and urged Charles in strong terms to equip her for the work.

A suit of beautiful armour is made for her; a white banner, embroidered with lilies, is given her; a rusty sword is found in a church and scoured into creditable appearance; a military staff is appointed her; her brothers, Peter and John, who followed her to Chinon, are placed in her retinue; two pages are appointed for her service; her two faithful knights are placed in her troop; the archbishop of Rheims accompanies her; soldiers are enlisted, and all is ready.

"Unfurl the white banner; and forward, march!"

One can hear the silvery tones of her thrilling voice come breaking through the mists of time.

All things are ready, the standard is given to the glad eyes of reawakened France, and Joan marches to deliver Orleans.

The Virgin leads the army.

She is clad in a full suit of white armour. She is mounted upon a beautiful black horse. Her white banner waves above her, and round her are a brilliant train of knights and cavaliers.

Night and morning, as that army marches, there is a ceremony Joan will not omit.

An altar must be raised, and the consecrated standard placed beside it; the soldiers kneel, the priests do their

holy office, sacred songs are sung, and the Virgin takes the Sacrament — her troops taking it with her.

Woe unto the enemy which such an army, led in such a spirit, shall meet in battle!

What need is there to tell the dreary detail of war?

Already the English were half whipped. The French had been aroused to confidence. They saw the hand of God in it. How could they fail?

It was an age when sorcery and witchcraft were believed in. The English were superstitious, and they believed that Joan was sent by the Devil.

Hence both armies fell into the same faith, so far as the supernatural character of the Virgin's mission was concerned, — the ground for dispute was, who sent her, God or the Devil?

When Joan entered Orleans the siege had already lasted since October. It was now May. The English had been steadily gaining ground all the while; and at no time had the French prospects been so gloomy as they were when she arrived.

But in ten days after her magic touch was laid to the work, the English had been utterly vanquished and driven away!

The fearless and tireless girl was in the thick of the fight all the time, was ever the first to advance, and the last to retire.

Her lips, ever uttering words of pity for the wounded, ever breathing prayers, ever chiding profanity and levity, were also ready and constant with the battle-cry of "Onward!"

Struck down with a severe wound, she herself drew the

iron from it, and was up and fighting again, in time to save the day.

Never was she petulant and harsh, save when the chieftains foiled her plans for advancing.

Rude, unutterably rude, were some of the insults cast in her teeth by the English.

Tears would dim the glorious eyes at such times, but she fought on — never resting, never doubting. She herself would catch up the scaling ladders and place them against the walls when no other dared do it, heedless of cannon-shot and flying arrows.

She herself would carry her banner to the very forefront of the struggle.

"Watch my standard; when it touches the walls, the place will be ours!"

And the heroic girl would press it forward, ever forward, until the silken folds of white and gold touched the walls, and her glad cry rang out, "The victory is ours!"

Time and again she rallied the broken ranks. Time and again she compelled triumph by refusing to fall back when the men said retreat.

And the final overthrow of the English and the breaking up of the siege of Orleans were due to her indomitable pluck in continuing to fight when the chieftains had ordered a retreat.

A.D. 1429 But at last Orleans is saved; the English withdraw sullenly. Back into the redeemed city comes the glorious country girl, while every bell peals forth notes of joy, and every voice is sweet with its "God bless you!"

Let us believe that the heroine enjoys her triumph.

Let us hope that she is happy.

The bitter days are coming swiftly enough, when all will be dark; let us trust that she drinks in all the sunshine now.

The common people crowd about her as she journeys from Orleans to Tours. They hail her with tears of joy; they reverently touch her hands, her dress; even stoop down and kiss the footprints of her horse!

The king comes to meet her. He offers to confer nobility on her — as if God had left that to him!

At the head of the victorious French, Joan followed the retreating English. She met them in fair fight in the open field and beat them — the first time such a thing had befallen the English at the hands of the French in scores of years. She took from them city after city, until the way was clear for Charles to go to Rheims and be crowned king of France.

That is a grand spectacle which so many thousands witness in the great cathedral of Rheims on July 17, 1429.

There are dignitaries of the Church in full canonicals; there are the princes of the state in all the splendour of velvet and gold. There is Charles, standing below the altar, waiting to be crowned. There is Joan by his side, sacred banner in hand. The archbishop pours consecrated oil upon Charles' head, and as the crown is placed, a peal of trumpets rings out clear and strong.

Then, as the multitude is shouting itself hoarse, Joan kneels at the feet of the king and says: —

"Now is fulfilled the pleasure of God."

And as she spoke, she wept, and all those who were in the church wept with her.

Her father was present, an honoured guest of the city.

Riding through the streets after the coronation, side by side with the king, cheered joyously upon all sides, she was noticed to be sad.

"I would that God would allow me to return to my home, to my sister and my brothers, to my father and my mother."

This ended her mission. She said that her Voices had not charged her with any work further than she had already done.

But the king would not have it so. Many cities and towns yet remained in the hands of the English. He knew the soldiers and the people had faith in Joan, and he wished to profit by her further service.

A.D. 1430 The poor girl yielded, though under protest. She had enemies near the king who hated her for her glory and for her influence. They now took every means to discredit her. Plans which she proposed were rejected. Plans which she disapproved were accepted. She was made to attempt military movements which she did not sanction, and she was not supported in those which she attempted.

Greatly did she suffer, and keenly feel the ingratitude of him she had made king.

The danger from the English having passed, the male commanders grew restive under Joan's leadership. These wretched curs whom she had inspired to bravery and success accused her of being dictatorial.

It is the old sad story.

One day Joan sallied out of the city of Compiègne, at the head of a small band of troops, to attack the English.

The governor of the town stayed inside, like a thrifty man intent on saving his skin.

Joan's small force did brilliant work, but as reënforcements came up for the English, her troops retreated, she doing her best to make them stand and fight. The enemy pushed on after the fleeing French, the gates of the town were open — in rush the fugitives, on come the pursuers, and bang go the gates! A.D. 1430

Joan was outside.

A faithful few died around her, but she was captured and led away.

Not one attempt did the brave governor make to save the grandest heroine that ever breathed.

The town was full of French soldiers, there was absolutely no danger that the small squad chasing Joan could capture it. Had they come in at the open gate, along with Joan, they would have been powerless in the midst of enemies, shut off from the succour of friends.

The poor child was led away to captivity and chains.

For more than a year she lived, suffering every day.

Brave? Ah, greatly and divinely brave, because it was never possible to wring from her lips one word of complaint against the graceless wretch she had enthroned, and who now dallied with lewd women, idling away the time in the luxuries of the wealth which she had brought him, and who yet never by word or letter or act tried to save her!

Dead these five centuries are those two, the maid and the king; but even now one shudders to think that the same God made them both.

The immediate captors of Joan were Burgundians, allies of the English.

The man who took her carried her to his master, a noble called the Bastard of Vendôme.

This noble sold her to his master, another noble named John of Luxemburg.

This noble sold her to the English for two thousand dollars.

Great was the joy of the English. Bells were rung in all the churches, songs of thanksgiving were sung, and the English and Burgundian chiefs all flocked to see her, "more joyful than if they had taken five hundred fighting men."

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Where were her friends? Was there no brave knight in all France to couch lance, uplift banner, and cry "To the rescue!"

Where was the king? Sipping wine amid painted women.

Where were the people — the people whom she had loved and had delivered?

Alas! The people abused the nobles for betraying her; put the signs of public mourning up in the streets, and prayed laboriously for her in the churches. There was even a procession of barefooted priests at Tours, which went through the city imploring heaven for her deliverance.

These extraordinary methods having been exhausted, the people rested from their labours.

The heroine of France, she who had given deliverance to her people and a crown to her king, was left to be bought and sold like base merchandise, was left to be caged and chained like a wild beast, while there was in preparation for her the harshest torture and the cruelest death any woman ever suffered.

At Rouen, in May, 1431, Joan was tried for her life.

The bishop of Beauvais, a creature in pay of the English, claimed jurisdiction over her because she was taken in his diocese. He charged her with being a "witch, idolatress, and heretic." A.D. 1431

The University of Paris urged on the prosecution, and six of its doctors acted as her judges.

Forty judges were empanelled, all of them Frenchmen, except three.

One of these judges, Nicolas de Houppeville, knowing what the trial meant, and feeling it to be a monstrous crime, refused to have anything to do with it.

The bishop of Beauvais imprisoned him, and threatened to drown him, but he escaped jail and fled.

Others besides this honest priest were reluctant to preside at the trial, but threats and persuasions silenced their objections.

So the court is organized, and the trial begins.

On one side is the power of the Church, and the power of English money and arms.

On the other is a helpless country girl, nineteen years old — moneyless, friendless, alone.

What other issue could there be but her condemnation?

How could she help it when they prevented her appeal to the Pope, or to the higher council?

What remedy had she when they suppressed all proofs of her innocence, and strained into the appearance of guilt her every word and deed?

Week after week dragged itself by as the subtle and cruel judges, who had denied her the benefit of counsel, plied her with questions and menaces and temptations.

Failing to ensnare her into confessions or self-crimination by these methods, they threatened her with torture

— that horrible process with which the authorities of Church and State were used to tear the flesh, crush the bones, or rend the limbs of the prisoner.

Joan is carried into the torture-chamber, and the bishop of Beauvais shows her the ghastly instruments with which her frail body is to be mangled. He points to the executioners, standing ready to seize her and do their dreadful work.

No mother, no father, no kinsman, no friend, stands beside the maiden to nerve her with encouragement, to say, "Take courage; be brave!"

No; she is alone — utterly alone in the dark of the dungeon — in the hands of relentless enemies who feast upon her woe and hunger for her life.

"Confess," says the bishop, "or you shall be stripped, and bound, and tortured!"

"Though you should tear me limb from limb, I would tell you nothing more!"

Thus spoke Joan, the bravest of all the world's brave!

Her very courage saved her.

Some of her judges persisted that she ought to be tortured, but as she was very weak and might die under it, and as they had already decided to condemn her, the torture was deemed unnecessary.

She was condemned to death, and the scaffold was built.

But the English were not satisfied.

Joan's death would be considered a martyrdom, unless they could procure from her some admission which would discredit her with the people.

Hence every device known to man was used to throw upon this lonely prisoner the odium of her own death, and to make her execution seem a necessity.

A priest, Loyseleur, was detailed to act as her friend, to condole with her, win her confidence, and to betray her.

"If you do what I tell you," said he, "you shall be saved."

Joan was carried to the scaffold, and Evard, the priest, began to preach the death sermon. He denounced her in the bitterest terms as a witch, a heretic, a blasphemer.

She listened without reply until he began to revile the French king. Then she answered warmly, defending the monarch who was leaving her to perish without effort to save her.

She was offered pardon if she would "revoke those words and deeds which had been reproved."

Again she repeated her appeal to the Pope.

"He is too far off," said Evard, "and you must submit to the Church as here represented."

He showed her a form of recantation, and asked her to abjure.

"What does abjure mean?" Joan inquired.

The word was explained to her.

"I appeal to the Universal Church whether I ought to abjure or not," cried the girl.

"You shall abjure instantly or be burnt this very day!" exclaimed the angry Priest Evard.

Her false friend, Loyseleur, now pleaded with her, "Do as I told you; accept a woman's dress."

"Do as he advises," cried all those around her.

"Why will you die?" they asked.

The judges pressed her. "Joan, we pity you so much. Take back what you have said."

Still she affirmed that she had done no wrong, and was

not guilty; and to the tumult of persuasive, urgent voices pressing her to abjure, she piteously said: —

"You take great pains to seduce me."

Then the bishop began to read the sentence of death.

She was on the scaffold, and could see the grim executioner waiting to do his office. The bishop read, the monks pleaded and promised, and at last the deserted and ensnared and bewildered girl gave way.

"I will submit to the Church."

At once they read to her a short form of recantation, contained in six or eight lines of writing, and asked her to sign it.

"I cannot read nor write," she said.

The secretary of the English king took her hand, and guided it to write her name.

It was a base trick. What she signed was not the simple form of abjuration as read to her, but was a confession of the long list of impossible and absurd charges made against her at the trial.

She was ordered back to prison.

The English soldiers were enraged at her apparent escape. They even threw stones at the judges.

The English Earl of Warwick complained of the turn things had taken.

"Do not fear, my lord," said one of the judges, "we shall soon have her again."

The judges went into Joan's cell, compelled her to take off her male clothing, and to put on woman's clothing in their presence.

She spent the next two days in tears, amid the insults of her jailers, three of whom stayed in her room at night.

Sunday morning she begged the guards to unchain her ankles, that she might rise from her bed and dress.

Undoing the chains, they took away her woman's dress, and threw her the man's suit she formerly wore.

"Sirs, you know I am forbidden to wear that," pleaded Joan.

Until noon she lay undressed, begging for the clothes they had taken from her. But in vain.

Then nature's necessity compelled the miserable child to rise and to put on the dress which she knew would be taken as a proof that she had relapsed into heresy and guilt.

A trap — an infinitely infamous trap — to ensnare to doom a pure and tender woman!

At once the soldiers spread the news.

"She has relapsed!" was the cry.

Think how unutterably she must have suffered — as a woman, as a Christian, as a prisoner, as a martyr!

Her judges came to see her next day.

"Forlorn, weeping, bruised, and disfigured!"

Thus they found the heroine of France.

"Let me die at once rather than suffer longer in this prison," she prayed.

"I have never done anything against God or the faith, whatever you have made me revoke. I did not understand what was in that deed of abjuration."

But her fate was sealed now.

The judges all agreed that she had relapsed into her heresy and must be burnt.

Gravely the monks showed her the dreadful reality that faced her.

She wept piteously and tore her hair.

"Oh, I appeal to God against the wrong done to me!"

They wanted her to "retract" again. But she yielded no more.

"Master Peter, where shall I be to-night?" asked the pale, anguished lips, speaking to one of the monks who seemed to look kindly on her.

"Have you not a good hope in God?" he asked.

"Ah, yes; and by God's grace I shall be in Paradise to-night!"

Let the judges go — and come no more.

The record is made up — made up for all the ages — made up to be cursed and bitterly despised and hated by all the sons of men forever!

Let the English heart be satisfied.

In all their race for empire, reeking at every step with the blood of the weak, there is nothing worse than this.

Let the axes ring as timbers are cut and fagots laid to make the funeral pile.

And away off at the cottage of Domremy, hard by the Meuse, let the old father and mother bend their aged heads and pray for the little girl who used to give all her coins to the poor, who had soft words and ready help for all the sick, who would give up her bed and sleep on the floor when the tired stranger came by and asked for rest and shelter! They will see her no more.

The French have basely sold her; the English have basely bought her; the king she served has forgotten her; the Church she loved has drawn the dead-line about her; — and look wherever she may, no valiant arm strives for her deliverance, no friendly lips speak audible defence. Those who least deserve to live are living. She who most deserved to live is to live no more.

She receives the Sacrament, with tears and deep devotion.

Clad in a woman's long gown, she is put into a cart, and, guarded by 800 soldiers, she is taken through the crowded streets.

Who is this comes rushing through the multitude, breaking through the ranks of the soldiers and striving to reach Joan? It is a haggard, miserable monk,— Loyseleur, the false friend.

Racked by remorse, he has come to ask her forgiveness. The soldiers drive him back.

Joan, weeping and praying, her face bent upon her hands, neither sees nor hears him.

What are the people doing?

Grieving, lamenting, sympathizing,— nothing more.

"O Rouen, is it here that I must die?" she cried.

Here and now, Joan. The time is come, poor child, and the white arms of death will take you soon into his infinite rest. A little longer, and the tears will cease forever, and thy splendid courage be tried no more!

In the old market-place they have built three scaffolds, one for the bishops and the nobles who wished to see the execution, another for Joan and some priests and officials, the third for Joan alone.

The last sermon is preached: "Joan, go in peace! The Church can no longer defend you."

God save us all from such defence as the Church gave Joan.

Only a few moments are left to her.

She does not see the crowd any more, nor hear them. She kneels and prays aloud, prays fervently, prays passionately, — prays for her king, prays for her friends, prays for her enemies!

All who hear her are touched with a great compassion.

Even the bishop weeps. She begs for a cross. She embraces it, weeping, calling upon God and the saints.

"Hurry up this business." "Are we going to wait here for dinner?" Thus cry the English soldiers.

"Take her! take her, and do your duty," hastily exclaims the bailiff of Rouen to the executioner.

Soldiers brutally drag Joan to the third pile, which, as we said, was made for her alone. She is fastened to the stake high up on the scaffold, that the flames may be slow in releasing her to the dread keeping of death.

They set fire to the pile. A monk is by her side, praying with her, and comforting her. His heart so yearns over the desolate girl that he does not notice the ascending flames.

Praise to thee, royal soul! Never wilt thou do a nobler thing.

She saw his danger and bade him go down.

"But hold up the cross, that I may see it," she pleaded.

Up spring the flames, fiercely leaping, wildly playing; and they catch the shrinking flesh in their red and hungry arms.

But she feels no fear. The good priest holds the cross almost in the midst of the fire; and out of the terrible furnace of flames she is heard crying, "Jesus, Jesus, Mary. My Voices."

Then, uttering one great cry, "Jesus," she droops her head upon her breast and dies.

"Ten thousand men are weeping. Some Englishmen alone laugh, or try to laugh," says the historian.

The ashes are collected and thrown into the Seine.

CHAPTER XVI

JOAN OF ARC (*continued*)

JOAN was dead, but the national spirit she had aroused was not to die with her.

The English caused the son of King Henry V. to be formally crowned and consecrated at Paris, December, 1431, but the French grew even more restive under the foreign yoke. The war went on, and the tide of success turned steadily against the invaders. A.D. 1431

At length, in 1435, the Treaty of Arras brought the Duke of Burgundy into alliance with the French party. Soon thereafter Charles VII. entered Paris in triumph,—the English troops were withdrawing. A.D. 1435

The wicked Queen Isabella, looking from the windows of her palace in Paris, saw the young English prince on his way to be crowned king of France. A.D. 1436

Some one pointed her out to the boy and he saluted her. She was his grandmother.

Turning away from the window, it is said that she wept bitterly. Neglected by the English, despised by the French, old and unloved and unhappy, her last days are said to have been wretched. As the people would pass her house they would point to it and say, "There lives the cause of all the sorrow that is in France." She died a few days after the Peace of Arras.

Twenty-four years come and go. The French king sits

securely upon his throne, and all goes well with the monarchy.

But it occurs to Charles that there is one shade upon his glory. He cannot forget that the people ascribe his success to Joan of Arc. He feels that history must do the same.

But the Church has said that Joan was a sorceress, a witch. She was burnt under conviction of being an emissary of the Devil.

Dull as Charles is, he realizes that Joan's reputation is to some extent his. He made no attempt to save her life — not he. Nor would he do so now. Joan's welfare is not his thought at all. He merely wishes to clear his record, so that it may not be held against him that he owes his crown to a condemned sorceress — a she-devil.

What must Charles do? Did not the Church decide against her at the bidding of a king?

Even so.

Cannot the Church decide for her at the bidding of a king.

Even so. Just as it did before she was allowed to proceed on her mission. Straightway preparation is made to have a new trial of the case.

Dead these many years is Joan's father — dead of a broken heart, they say, because of his daughter's fearful fate.

But the mother still lives, and the brothers.

They are led to petition the Pope to grant a new trial. Perchance mistakes were made. The verdict may have been a trifle hasty. Joan may, after all, have been entitled to a verdict of acquittal.

Petitions accordingly are laid before the Pope. Gra-

ciously he orders a rehearing of the case, to see if indeed Joan cannot be "rehabilitated."

Not brought back to sunny love and life; not brought back to breathe the breath of praise, to hear the plea of passionate regret, to walk with queenly step amid a redeemed and happy people!

No. The Church cannot bring her back, but it can "rehabilitate" her.

* * * * * * * * *

So they set about it. There is a great assembling of dignitaries, doctors, officials big and little.

There is a great hearing of testimony. In stately review Joan's brief life is made to pass.

Her mother testifies, her brothers, her playmates, her army friends, her former judges. Even the torturers, who were present when she was threatened in the dungeon, are called in to testify.

Any amount of evidence can now be had, for a king's honour is at stake.

The result is that Joan is shown to have been a pure child, a pure girl, a pure maiden. A child who so loved the church bells that she would carry little gifts to the bell ringer, and ask him, in the sweetest way, not to be careless or negligent in ringing them. A girl who was so devout that the only reproach cast upon her was that she was too religious. A maiden who was so pure that she turned away from lovers, honours, and riches, that she might consecrate her life to the divine call of duty.

All this is easy enough to prove now, for the king wants it proved.

And it is easy for the Church to see it now, for the king wants it seen.

Therefore solemn judgment is rendered in Joan's favour. She is unanimously acquitted of the charges made against her. The verdict of guilty is quashed, and Joan formally declared "rehabilitated."

Joan's family feel gratified.

The people feel gratified.

The Church feels gratified.

The king, especially, feels gratified.

Joan, only, feels nothing. Joan is dead.

Twenty-five years have passed away since the fires at Rouen burned out and died; since the ashes of the brave and tender girl were cast in the Seine, and were carried forth to sublime burial in the sad and solemn sea, where only the mourning waves could chant her dirge, the silent stars light her funeral, and the great God mark her grave.

* * * * * * * * *

Joan of Arc is one of the Mystics — one of those strangely endowed and inspired people, who, with the slenderest human support, alter the course of the world's history.

Like Mohammed, Peter the Hermit, and Ignatius Loyola, there seemed to be nothing supernatural about her, save her intense concentration of purpose and the vivid imagination which made fancies appear realities.

The world cannot comprehend such characters, nor resist them, nor forget them.

Joan lives as truly to-day as when she laid flowers upon the altars, or when she led the wavering lines of battle back to victory.

Possessing no relic of her, no painting, no full description, the minds of after generations have tried earnestly

to realize the face and the form of this "country girl who overthrew the power of England."

Poets have sung of her in immortal verse; painters have dreamed of her on imperishable canvas; sculptors, in the purity and strength of marble, have made her appear in the lovely shape she took in their own ideals.

Splendid monuments commemorate her at Orleans and at Paris. Every year at Orleans a festival is held in her honour, as it has been, with few intervals, ever since her death.

The French have loved many kings, warriors, statesmen, poets, and philosophers, but it may be safely said that in those sacred national archives, where veneration and love and profound respect guard the priceless heritage of great names and glorious examples, no king, no chieftain, no statesman, poet, or philosopher, disputes the place held by the shepherd girl, who was to France what the shepherd boy was to Israel.

CHAPTER XVII

LAST YEARS OF CHARLES THE SEVENTH

His Death

FRANCE had been so long the theatre of war that she was well-nigh desolate. Three generations of military strife had brutalized and impoverished her people. Robbers infested the highways, ruffian soldiers roamed here and there pillaging and ravishing and burning. Commerce nearly ceased, and agriculture almost abandoned its fields. Crime and disorder ran riot over the unhappy land.

A.D. 1438 In Paris 24,000 houses were empty, and the streets were so deserted that wolves came into the city. During a single week in September, 1438, they devoured forty persons.

A few large towns, protected by high and thick stone walls, were secure from marauders; but the smaller villages were the helpless prey of the lawless soldiery of both sides.

Edward III. of England had led an army from one end of France to the other, but being unable either to take the walled cities, or to find glory or booty, or even sufficient food, in merely overrunning the open country, he was quick to patch up a hasty peace, and to get away from war-cursed France.

Worn out by suffering and tired of bloodshed, the French people yearned for a strong government; and it suited King Charles to give it them — a much stronger one, as it proved, than the people had suspected it would be.

The turbulent feudal nobility were irksome to the king, as well as to the people. Their strength when combined was stronger than his. To reign at all, he had to pay his court to his powerful vassals, and to keep a majority of them satisfied. Their rivalries, jealousies, and ambitions were a constant menace to the royal authority and to the peace of the realm.

Guided by wise advisers, Charles entered upon that line of policy which was to concentrate all power in the hands of the king — independent of the feudal lords upon the one hand, and of the people on the other.

In his youth and early manhood Charles had been idle, irresolute, and licentious. Gradually as he reached middle life a great change came over him. His dangers, his trials, and his success had developed him. He became industrious, resolute, and far-seeing. He worked on definite plans, waited patiently for opportunities, was not to be turned from his purpose, and in the end revolutionized France by crowning his schemes with success.

Much of the wisdom of his later years he owed to his good advisers, De Richemont, De la Fayette, Jean Bureau, Jacques Cœur. His favourite concubine, Agnes Sorel, is also said to have used her influence over the king for the good of the country.

The revolution effected by Charles consisted in establishing a standing army and a permanent direct land-tax.

Previous to this time (1439) there had been no stand-

ing army or permanent direct tax since the downfall of the Roman Empire.

Armies had been made up of the feudal tenants who owed military service, usually forty days in the year, for the use of their lands. In addition to these, mercenary troops were hired for temporary use.

These ruffians very frequently got no pay beyond the booty incident to the pillage of towns and the sack of cities captured.

A.D. 1439 By the Ordinance of Orleans, passed by the States General in 1439, Charles was authorized to create a standing army of 9000 cavalry. To support this body of troops, the king was granted a permanent direct tax of 1,400,000 livres.

By another ordinance, passed in 1448, he was authorized to establish an infantry force, each of the 16,000 parishes of France being required to furnish one foot-soldier.

By the formation of a standing army the king had made himself independent of the feudal lords. This the common people saw. They did not also see that it made him independent of the people.

Realizing the danger, the nobles revolted, the king's eldest son heading them.

A.D. 1440 The common people of the country, and the merchants, artisans, and laborers of the towns dreaded the monarch less than they hated the despotic feudal lords, and they therefore rallied to the support of the throne. The rebellion was crushed; one of its leaders, a relative of the king, was sewn up in a sack and tossed into the Seine; and the others were then ready for argument and open to conviction. The king's son, Louis, retired to his own dominions, Dauphiny, where he continued to plot against his father and to foment miscellaneous deviltry.

Under the management of Jacques Cœur, the merchant prince of his time, the financial administration of the kingdom was systematized and concentrated. Individual receivers of public moneys were made to account to the receiver-general, and the receiver-general made to report to the Chamber of Accounts. The great officers of the crown were made to report once a month to the king himself.

Simple as these regulations now seem, they were then regarded as radical reforms.

The courtiers who fawned around the king owed Jacques Cœur two mortal grudges. He had risen from the commons to wealth and high station, and he had guided the monarch to his independence of the nobles.

Jacques was very rich. He was the Rothschild of his day, unscrupulous, perhaps, and slippery, but true to his king and his country. He was the first Frenchman who tapped the trade of the East. He was the pioneer of those merchants who have since founded empires and changed the map of the world.

Jacques was the first man of all France to build ships and export to Africa and Egypt the merchandise of France, bringing back the spices and the silks of the East.

Not only did his ships sail the seas, but he opened mines of silver, lead, and copper in France, and carried on at the same time a manufacturing business which gave employment to 300 hands.

Attracting the notice of the king, he was promoted until he became treasurer of France and the coiner of the realm.

In many fields was Jacques most useful to the king.

As a diplomat he reconciled the squabbles of the two old men, Felix and Nicolas, each of whom claimed to be pope and personal representative of Jesus Christ.

As royal commissioner he pacified the estates of Languedoc, and attended to the installation of the new parliament of Toulouse.

As treasurer he brought to the king's finances good order and steady revenues.

As a wealthy subject he opened his purse to his monarch and loaned him, when greatly needed, two hundred thousand crowns, saying, with splendid loyalty, "Sire, all that I possess belongs to you."

To no one after Joan of Arc did Charles owe more than to Jacques; and to no one after Joan was Charles so royally mean and ungrateful.

The courtiers made Charles suspect that Jacques had poisoned Agnes Sorel, and when that accusation completely failed, they made a general complaint that Jacques had too much property. The old king, the most suspicious of mortals, turned against his glorious subject, stripped him of all his wealth, shut him up in prison, and divided out among the envious courtiers the lands and the palaces of the greatest business man France had produced.

A.D. 1455 Jacques spent nearly five years in prison; was taken from it, by force, by some of his former clerks and agents; was carried to Rome, and was there honourably received by Pope Nicolas V.

His last service was heroic. Appointed by the Pope commander of a small crusading fleet, he sailed away from Italy to carry help to the Greeks, who were resisting the Turks.

Arriving at Chios he fell ill there, November, 1456, and died, praying the French king, in a last letter, not to let his children come to want.

The policies of the king were completely successful. The permanent tax made him self-reliant. The people, by granting this tax, had lost the power of controlling the monarch by refusing supplies. Having no further need for the States General, he ceased to assemble the delegates as had been his custom when he needed their help. The States General was, henceforth, almost extinct.

As previously stated, the nobles foresaw the royal despotism which would grow out of these changes, but their resistance failed.

The common people, with the exception of a slight rising in Guienne, did not resist at all.

So weary were they with war and confusion that they either sanctioned the royal encroachment, or humbly submitted to it.

Instead of reserving to themselves the power of voting supplies and of controlling the military, they surrendered, voluntarily, the principle which involved liberty and security — not only surrendered it, but fought on the side of the king to maintain the surrender. They could not foresee that this concession of theirs would be pushed further and further by the kings of France until it should become intolerable to men and gods, and that, after generations of misery, the reaction would come — come in madness and blood, and be called the French Revolution.

Thomas Basin, a historian of that day, realized the far-reaching nature of the royal encroachments, and he wrote, "Into such misery and servitude is fallen the

realm of France, heretofore so noble and free, that all the inhabitants are openly declared, by the generals of finance and their clerks, taxable at the will of the king without anybody's daring to murmur or even to ask for mercy."

But while the king was rigorous in enforcing his own authority, he was equally resolute in putting down crime. He cleared the highways of robbers, opened roads through dangerous forests, put an end to the ruffianism of wandering soldiers, restored peace and good order, and took care that practical justice should be administered in his courts to the poor as well as the rich.

"He is the king of kings, and there is no doing without him," said Francis Foscari, doge of Venice.

And yet this "king of kings" was, perhaps, the most wretched man in all his dominions.

He distrusted his people, and shut himself up in his castle, indulging himself in evil pleasures. He had banished his wife from court, and suspected his son of a design to poison him.

Old and suspicious and lonely, the king of France was a prey to his own terrors and timid fancies.

Some historians say he died of an incurable ulcer on his mouth. Others say that he would not eat, fearing poison, and thus, to avoid the risk of murder, he chose the certainty of suicide.

Whether from the ulcer or the starvation, it is certain that he died miserably, July 22, 1461.

CHAPTER XVIII

LOUIS THE ELEVENTH

"IF I thought my own cap knew my secrets, I would throw it into the fire," was a favourite saying of the prince who now, at the age of thirty-eight, became king of France, under the name of Louis XI. A.D. 1461

For five years he had been living in exile, at the Castle of Genappe, in Hainault, beyond the dominions of his royal father, and within those of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy.

Louis had ever been a factious, impatient son — indignant, apparently, at his father's continuance in life.

At the age of seventeen he had appeared at the head of a rebellion of the feudal lords, as we have already seen. Upon the failure of that attempt to seize the throne, he had retired to his own principality, Dauphiny.

He had married a charming princess, Margaret Stuart, of Scotland, and he had led her such a wretched life that, at the age of twenty-one, she had died, with these words upon her lips: "Oh! fie on life! Speak to me no more of it."

Continuing to plot and to negotiate secret leagues against his father, he had aroused the wrath and dread of Charles to such a pitch that the royal father had mustered his troops to make war upon this dangerous son.

Louis thereupon fled from France and went to Brussels,

where the good Duke Philip of Burgundy gave him refuge and a pension of 36,000 livres.

Remarking upon the conduct of Duke Philip, Charles VII. said: "He has received the fox at his court, he will soon see what will become of his chickens."

Charles' opinion of his son Louis was eminently correct; in the course of a few years the chickens of Burgundy had become the spoil of the crafty and cruel Louis.

Charles having died, Louis at once set out upon his return to France. He was attended by Philip the Good and a splendid train of Burgundian nobles. On the 18th of August, 1461, Louis was solemnly crowned and consecrated, at Rheims, in the presence of a magnificent assemblage of the feudal nobility of France and Burgundy.

Philip the Good had behaved most handsomely to Louis, had sheltered him when a fugitive, had supplied him with money to live upon, and had spent enormous sums in making the coronation a grand success.

In a burst of seeming gratitude, Louis lavished upon Philip the Good royal flatteries and promises. Everything that Philip asked, Louis granted, in promises.

Philip was allowed to name twenty-four counsellors to the Parliament; but not one of them did Louis ever allow to take his seat.

He promised the duke that Burgundian goods should have free passage across the French frontiers provided the French Parliament consented; and Louis took good care that the Parliament should not consent.

Philip the Good returned home rich in promises but bankrupt in cash. Louis went forward to Paris to settle himself in the midst of a web of intrigues and treacheries, and to earn for himself the name of "the universal spider."

So deeply did he plan, so zealously and patiently did he work, that when he died, twenty-one years afterwards, France was no longer feudal or mediæval; she was modern.

Louis was a great king. A thoroughly bad man and utterly unscrupulous in method, yet his lifework was, upon the whole, a benefit to mankind. He was crafty, deceitful, cruel, and calculating. Not wanting in courage, he shrank from war because he placed more reliance in his artful management of men, his briberies, his deceptions, his cajoleries. He was the first of modern kings who relied upon statecraft rather than force, who trusted his intellect rather than his sword. He understood human nature, especially the darker side of it; and his policy was to control men through their interests and their fears. He loved to punish, but he could restrain his hand and bide his time. No feeling of love or of hate was allowed to control him. Guided by a cold, clear intelligence, he moved crookedly but constantly toward his aims, and accomplished them.

Louis commenced his reign by a serious mistake. He dismissed his father's trusted and experienced counsellors and replaced them with new men of low degree.

One of these new counsellors of the king had been a doctor, another a barber, and a third a cook.

This rash act created intense anger and disgust among the upper classes.

Louis also raised the taxes from 1,800,000 to 3,000,000 livres. Riots broke out in Rheims, and Louis had several of the citizens hanged, and the ears of many others cropped.

The Parliament of Paris, which had a most extensive

jurisdiction, was curbed by the creation of the Parliament of Bordeaux.

The Church was reduced in power, some of its privileges curtailed, and a list of its property demanded, in order that the king might check its encroachments.

The aristocracy was still more seriously threatened. The king commenced bestowing titles of nobility with free hand upon persons of low birth; and he put restrictions upon the feudal rights of hunting, to defend agriculture against the havoc made by aristocratic amusements. He also revived against the feudal lords certain feudal dues which had not been claimed by the late king, and demanded immediate payment of these dues.

Thus Louis went on making enemies for four years, and then a rebellion broke out.

The great nobles confederated under the lead of Charles the Rash, son of the Duke of Burgundy.

A.D. 1465 This revolt was called the "League of the Common Weal." The rebels drew over to their side Louis' brother, Charles, a young man of eighteen. Their declared purpose was to reform the abuses of "the piteous government of Louis XI."

Had it not been for the excellent standing army his father had organized, Louis would have been lost. Nearly every one of his trusted supporters deserted him. He had angered all classes, and all turned against him.

In his distress he summoned a meeting of the burgesses of the towns at Rouen, and made a personal appeal to the common people for aid. He explained his measures and his intentions, and won over to his side these deputies from the northern towns. He also assembled the

nobles and addressed them with great eloquence, but could not prevail upon them.

The army of the "League of the Common Weal" advanced upon Paris, fought the king in the battle of Montlhéry, and remained masters of the field. The king, however, shut himself up in Paris and began to negotiate for peace. In a short while the nobles who composed the League grew tired of the war, developed jealousies among themselves, and were ready to make terms with the king. A.D. 1465

By the Treaty of Conflans Louis conceded everything the rebels demanded, trusting to luck to get it all back again.

He ceded Normandy, almost one-third of his kingdom, to his brother Charles. To Charles the Rash, son of the Duke of Burgundy, he ceded Boulogne, Guienne, Péronne, and the towns of the Somme. To the Duke of Brittany he granted Étampes, exemption from appeals to Parliament, dispensation from feudal dues, and the right of coining money. To the other members of the League he granted lands and enormous pensions.

After the feudal lords had provided for themselves in this handsome manner, they bethought themselves of the "Public Weal." Consequently they appointed a commission of thirty-six notables to inquire into the abuses and disorders of "the piteous government of Louis XI." This commission did nothing.

So very narrow had been Louis' escape from absolute ruin, that the memory of it remained with him to the last, and his dying advice to his son was to avoid the mistake of dismissing the old and trusted counsellors of the crown at the beginning of his new reign.

The Treaty of Conflans left Louis fatally crippled. France was dismembered and cut up into half a dozen little kingdoms. Any two of the great feudal houses might combine, and find themselves more powerful than the humbled king.

Two pillars of strength were left him, his standing army, and his own matchless skill in dealing with other men. The Treaty of Conflans had hardly been signed and the League dissolved before Louis set about tearing it up.

The Parliament of Paris, instigated by the king, refused to ratify and register the treaty.

Trouble broke out between the Duke of Normandy and the Duke of Brittany. Louis took advantage of it to march into Normandy, overrun it with his army, and reattach it to France.

How did Louis prevent the League from resisting this violation of the recent treaty?

A.D. 1466 By stirring up a revolt among the Flemish subjects of Charles the Rash, who by the death of his father had become Duke of Burgundy, and thus keeping him busy at home; by coming to a secret understanding with the Duke of Brittany; by making separate treaties and alliances with the houses of Bourbon and Anjou, and thus attaching them by the ties of interest to his side; by giving high office to the Count of St. Pol; and by granting to disaffected burgesses permanent possession of their offices and exemption from taxation. In Paris, especially, he used every means of attaching the leading merchants of the city to his cause.

The Dukes of Burgundy and Brittany were greatly alarmed by the rapid strides to power which Louis was

thus making, and they entered into an alliance with Edward IV. of England, who was to invade France with an army.

Louis summoned the delegates of the people in convention, States General, and laid the case before them. "Do you want France to lose Normandy?" asked the king. The States Géneral answered with emphatic negative, authorized Louis to hold on to Normandy, and further resolved that the Duke of Brittany should be called to order. A.D. 1468

Louis promptly marched into Brittany and compelled the rebellious duke to submit.

Instead of turning, now, upon the Duke of Burgundy and reducing him to subjection, Louis proposed a conference with him. Having received a written pledge of safe-conduct, Louis went almost alone to visit Charles at Péronne. A.D. 1468

While the king and the duke were discussing terms of peace an awkward thing happened. Some time previous to this interview, Louis had sent two emissaries to the city of Liège, one of Charles' Flemish towns, to stir up a rebellion against Charles. It seems that Louis had either forgotten the circumstance when he went upon his visit to Charles, or had presumed that the emissaries had made a failure.

At any rate, while king and duke were hobnobbing in the friendliest style, each doing his level best to outwit and overreach the other, here comes a pretty piece of news! Liège is in revolt; there is riot and bloodshed; the rebels of Liège sally forth and capture the town of Tongres; and the two emissaries of King Louis are seen to be leading the insurgents.

Great was the wrath of Charles. Great was the temptation to strike the head off this royal guest, King Louis, then and there. For many hours Charles was undecided what to do, raved and threatened, strode the floor with restless steps, and lost much valuable sleep.

Louis, in the meanwhile, though considerably frightened, was cool and crafty. Realizing that he was caught in his own snare, he ate his humble pie with the best possible grace, calmly waited till the first fury of Charles' wrath should pass, and dealt out among the friends and advisers of Charles large sums of money.

With one accord these friends and advisers counselled Charles to release Louis, and, headstrong as Charles was, he let the fox out of the trap — a mistake which Louis, under similar circumstances, might not have made.

Hard conditions, however, were put upon Louis. He was required to go with Charles to help put down the rebellion. Readily consenting, he joined forces with the duke, fought with courage against the rebels whom he had caused to revolt, and when Liège capitulated entered the city side by side with Charles, crying, "Hurrah for Burgundy!" — to the amazement of the natives, who knew not the depths of royal duplicity.

Having drained this cup of humiliation, Louis was allowed to return to France, covered with ridicule and shame.

Louis had sworn to abide by the treaty he had made with Charles at Péronne — had sworn it most solemnly upon a piece of the true cross. The Treaty of Péronne merely confirmed that of Conflans, and bound the king to carry the former treaty out.

Louis no sooner reached his own dominions than he began to seek means of evading so ruinous a compact.

Instead of ceding Normandy again, he prevailed upon his brother Charles to relinquish his claims to Normandy and Champagne, and to accept the province of Guienne, where he would be removed from the influence of Duke Charles.

Louis had been advised to the famous meeting at Péronne by Cardinal Balue and the bishop of Verdun. He now discovered that these eminent divines had been in the pay of the Duke of Burgundy. With considerable attention to details, Louis caused to be made two iron cages, eight feet broad and seven feet high, and in these iron cages the cardinal and the bishop spent ten years. That Louis dared to punish these princes of the Church, in disregard of the Pope's protest, is a powerful proof of his intrepidity; that he did not behead them at once is like proof of the fear which the State had of the Church.

When old and feeble and miserably afraid of death and the future, Louis released these prisoners at the personal request of Pope Sixtus IV.

The king struck terror into the feudal barons, also, by making war upon the Duke of Nemours and the Count of Armagnac. He reduced them both to submission.

His long arm also reached across into England, where he supplied the Duke of Warwick with the means of overthrowing Edward IV.

Having prevailed upon the Duke of Brittany to renounce all foreign alliances, Louis now stood at the head of a united France, and he determined to humble the Duke of Burgundy.

Putting a large army into the field, Louis seized upon

the frontier towns of the duke, catching that impetuous person unawares.

But the feudal lords of France dreaded the growing power of the king, and they soon began to plot against him. They realized that the Duke of Burgundy was the last of the great feudal chiefs, and that if the crown reduced him to subjection, the feudal system was dead.

A.D. 1471 So the Duke of Brittany and the Duke of Guienne, Louis' brother, and the constable of St. Pol conspired against the king. Their object was to dethrone Louis and to set up his younger brother, Charles, Duke of Guienne, who was a weakling they hoped to be able to control.

Thus Louis found in his brother his most dangerous foe.

Around this brother all the elements of opposition were steadily gathering. Louis made Charles flattering offers for peace, but they were rejected. Charles assembled an army, appointed his generals, and requested the Pope to release him from his oath of allegiance to Louis.

A.D. 1472 Just at the right time for Louis, Charles died of poison, and the abbot of St. Jean d'Angély was accused of the crime of poisoning him. King Louis suppressed the documents of the abbot's trial, and there is no proof either against the abbot or the king. All the historian can safely say is that no death was ever more acceptable and necessary to a monarch than that of Charles to Louis.

The Duke of Burgundy openly proclaimed that the king had poisoned his brother, but of proof there is none.

This death upset the enemies of Louis. It destroyed their rallying point, their common centre. Duke Charles,

it is true, invaded France and laid about him in his usual furious way, but he accomplished nothing of importance, was repeatedly repulsed by the towns he besieged, and he soon retired to his own country.

The Duke of Brittany, after suffering repeated defeats at the hands of the king, was glad to make peace.

Soon afterwards Charles the Rash also accepted a truce, and thus the great conspiracy ended. Louis had completely triumphed.

Charles the Rash was the last of the knights, the last of those proud, brave, insolent, violent, and magnificent feudal lords who had ruled kings and people during the Middle Ages. Headstrong and obstinate, he rushed upon danger with blind impetuosity, and scorned all the arts of conciliation. Had he been half so shrewd in the management of men as Louis was, he would not only have erected his duchy into a kingdom, but would have been more powerful than any European king. His dominions were more wealthy and populous than those of any neighbouring monarch, and his court far more splendid. But he extended his conquests imprudently, arrayed all the surrounding powers against him, and showed no skill in dealing with the danger after it arose.

Louis formed a league against Charles, and the duke steadily lost ground in the war which followed. He prevailed upon Edward IV., who was again the king of England, to invade France, but Louis bribed the king and his advisers, and the expedition came to naught. A.D. 1474

Louis paid the English king 75,000 crowns, agreed to give him annually 50,000 more, and arranged a marriage between his son and Edward's daughter. It suited Louis afterwards to break this agreement, and he broke it. A.D. 1475

Charles the Rash now made peace with Louis, in order to give his undivided attention to a war against Lorraine and the Swiss. He reduced Lorraine, but was routed by the Swiss. His cruelty in murdering the inhabitants of
A.D. 1476 the little town of Granson, after they had surrendered to him upon the promise that he would spare their lives, so enraged the Swiss that the nation rose against him as one man. They drove him out of the country in utter rout, having captured his artillery, his tent, his sword, his ducal seal, his diamonds, and his collar of the Golden Fleece. Gathering another army, Charles renewed the invasion, and was defeated with immense slaughter at Morat.

Charles now found himself almost without an army. For many months he brooded over his disgrace. He could neither eat nor sleep. Dumb rage and despair took possession of him. At last, in a fatal fit of rashness,
A.D. 1477 he rushed upon his enemies, who were 20,000 strong, with a handful of men (4000), gave battle at Nancy in a blinding snow-storm, was hopelessly defeated, and was slain by a deaf soldier who could not hear his call for quarter. Stripped of every shred of clothing, this haughty prince was left half buried in the mud. On the day after the battle the duke's body was recognized, and was given a stately burial by his enemies.

From the loins of this headlong warrior sprang Charles V. of Germany, who in after years was to fight again over these territories, and was to bring France to her knees.

Louis was now secure. He had found France divided into almost independent provinces under feudal chiefs; it was now combined under a centralized government of the king. It was strong at home and respected abroad.

While the reckless Duke of Burgundy had been dashing his power to fragments, his wily rival, the king of France, had continued to destroy powerful domestic enemies.

He had arrested the Duke of Alençon in 1473, and divided his property, in advance, among the judges who were to try the case; whereupon these judges, with unanimity and promptness, decided that the duke had forfeited life and goods. It pleased Louis to let the duke keep his life, in a secure prison, and to let the judges keep the goods.

The Count of Armagnac was attacked and slain, and his domains confiscated to the crown (1475).

The Duke of Nemours was arrested (1477), thrown into an iron cage in the Bastille, was tortured until he confessed his treason, was tried by judges to whom his property had already been given, was condemned, and was beheaded.

A brother of the Duke of Armagnac was detected in plots, was tried, condemned, and beheaded.

The Count of St. Pol, who had in turn betrayed every prince who had trusted him, had been detected by all, had lost the support of all, and had been executed by Louis.

In this manner the king moved cautiously but persistently toward his great purpose of striking down the feudal aristocracy.

The death of Charles the Rash had left the Burgun- A.D.
dian inheritance to his daughter, Mary. Five candidates 1477
sought her hand, and her lands, in matrimony. One of these was the eight-year-old son of King Louis. Mary chose to wed Maximilian, the son of the emperor of Germany.

Louis, however, had already taken possession of Burgundy and Artois, and had sent his troops into the Flemish provinces of the late duke.

A.D. 1479 Maximilian, advancing at the head of the Flemings to resist the French invasion, met and defeated the army of Louis at Guinegate. The victory, however, was not followed up; and, by a treaty made soon afterwards, Louis, the royal robber, was allowed to keep about half of the Burgundian possessions.

In this conflict between Mary and Louis were sown the seeds of those wars which afterwards cost France so much blood and so much treasure.

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Eleven provinces were added to the royal dominions by Louis, and he was now reaching out after Brittany, the sole remaining feudal dukedom which preserved its independence. In 1480 and 1481 the provinces of Maine, Anjou, and Provence fell to him by the wills of King René and his nephew Charles, who had held those provinces.

In 1482 Mary of Burgundy died, leaving two children, Philip and Margaret.

The Flemings revolted from the rule of Maximilian, and turned to Louis for alliance and support. They sent an embassy to him to propose a marriage between Margaret and the dauphin. As dower, the little princess would bring to her husband the French provinces of the Burgundian inheritance. Although the dauphin was under contract to wed the daughter of the English King, Edward IV., Louis agreed to the Flemish proposals.

A.D. 1482 He received the Flemish ambassadors at his palace-fortress of Plessis-lès-Tours. He had shut himself up

in this dismal dwelling, and was spending his last days in loneliness, distrust, and fear of death. After passing drawbridges and bastions, the envoys found themselves in a small room, dimly lighted, and in a corner of the chamber they saw an old man, bent double, and almost concealed in rich furs. It was Louix XI., who had been struck with paralysis the year before, and had become more cruel, more suspicious, and more active in plots and plans than ever.

He caused the Bible to be brought so that he might swear to the treaty. "If I swear with my left hand, you must excuse it," said the king to the envoys, "my right is a little weak." But upon second thought it occurred to him that objection might afterwards be made to the treaty on that account, and he therefore touched the book with his paralyzed right arm.

This was the last important alliance made by Louis. He was only sixty years old, but he was worn out, bald, bent, and paralyzed.

As his feebleness increased, his savage temper and insane distrust of everybody grew worse. Every year he added to the defences of his palace-fortress, kept four hundred archers on duty to guard it, with orders to shoot at whoever approached it at night.

Louis had more than doubled the taxes of the people, and they hated him as they groaned under his burdens. He had humbled the aristocracy and they detested him. Breathing this atmosphere of hostility, the king trusted nobody, and while enduring the horrors of constant dread, he inflicted the same terrors upon his children, his relatives, his wisest counsellors, and his oldest servants.

Only to his doctor was he mild and submissive. So

great was Louis' fear of death that he cringed to his physician, loaded him with honours and rewards, and abjectly endured the insolence with which the doctor treated him.

Hearing of a holy man who lived at Naples, Louis prevailed upon the king of Naples to send him this holy man, St. Francis de Paul; and the French king would kneel at his feet, and pray this saint to prolong his life. Not content with this, to lengthen his days, Louis procured relics, bones of dead saints, holy oil from Rheims, everything which superstition and terror could suggest,

Having been bluntly told that death was inevitable, Louis no longer tried to escape it. He gave minute directions as to his burial, took wise precautions to insure the quiet succession of his son, expressed pity for the condition of his people, advised the dauphin against war, and died August 30, 1483.

"Never did I see him free from care," writes Comines, his counsellor and historian. His whole life was devoted to labour, to trial, to perils, to dark intrigues, to ruthless ambition, to perfidy and crime.

But he did a great work. He was one of the few men who left the world different from what he found it.

To raise up a power to aid him in holding the nobles in check, he gave local self-government to many towns, and received their representatives in the national States General. He encouraged commerce, mining, and manufactures. The first silk manufactories were established in France in his reign. He encouraged the newly discovered art of printing, and established several printing-presses.

He encouraged medicine, and it was during his reign

that the first surgical operation for stone was tried. The experiment was made upon a condemned criminal, was successful, and the man was pardoned.

He established the post-office, first for his own use, afterwards for the public. As this was the origin of our modern post-office system, it is worth while to mention that the royal decree establishing it bears date June 19, 1464.

He founded or reorganized the universities of Valence, Bourges, and Besançon, besides several schools of law and medicine.

He had formed the design of a uniform system of laws for France, and a uniform system of weights and measures. He had already gathered together the laws of several other nations and put wise men to studying them for the purpose of replacing the various and conflicting local customs which prevailed in the several provinces of France with one regular and uniform system. Death cut him down before he could finish this important work, and it was not till Napoleon's iron hand was at the French helm that the statesmanly design of Louis XI. was carried out.

Charlemagne had battled with barbarism, in behalf of Christianity and civilization. With giant steps he had trod back and forth from Spain to Germany and from Germany to Spain, battling, always battling, against Mohammedanism on the one side and paganism on the other. With colossal energy he beat down savagery, created the form and order of regular administration, and introduced religious authority to develop moral ideas and moral standards in the place of the brute force of barbarism.

Dying before his work was completely done, the members of the great political body he had created fell apart, and feudalism arose and ruled.

The French kings sank into nothingness; they were only feudal chiefs among feudal chiefs. Nominally their position was that of federal head of a number of federal states, each of which had its own ruler, its laws, its courts, its right to coin money, its right to make war and peace, and its exemption from federal taxation.

The feudal system was a confederation, like that of the United States, for instance, but the greater power was in the separate states composing the federation. The central government had no right to tax the citizens of the different states, the royal laws did not bind the separate states except by the consent of the local ruler, and the royal courts had no jurisdiction over cases arising in the various states.

It was this system which had reduced the French kings to insignificance; and it was this system which had fed the pride of the feudal chiefs of the provinces until their tyranny became as intolerable to the common people as to the king.

We have shown how the French kings began, cautiously, to fall back upon the masses of the people, and to make common cause with them against the feudal lords. We have seen how Philip the Fair encouraged the towns to make a stand against the castles, and how the abolition of slavery, the creation of a standing army, the grant of a perpetual tax, the extension of the royal laws into the feudal provinces, and the giving of the right of appeal from the feudal courts to the royal courts, gradually sapped the strength of the feudal system. The

power left the states of the federation and became centralized in the general government.

This revolution required much time, much patient management, much war, much treachery and crime. When Louis XI. ascended the throne, the feudal chiefs expected him to reverse the royal policy and return to feudalism. On the contrary, the one great aim of his reign was to centralize the royal power, and to crush the feudal spirit into complete submission to the throne. His one dream was of a regenerated France, — not a France torn into warring fragments, bleeding from civil war within and from the invasion of English kings and Burgundian nobles without; but a France united and powerful, obeyed at home and respected abroad.

To accomplish this work Louis spared himself no toil, no rest, no crime. To serve France, he could wait, could meekly suffer insult, could humbly drain the cup of humiliation. Never once, so far as we can find, did Louis have a personal ambition. If ever France had a king who thought of nothing but France, Louis was he. No dangers could unnerve him, no difficulties stay him, no defeat stop him. His retreat was but a preparation for another advance, his submission was but a crouching for a more dangerous spring.

Year in and year out, this ugly, lean, careworn man stalked about, with his long hair, his stooping shoulders, his spindle shanks, his closely pressed lips, his shabby old hat garnished with leaden images of the Virgin stuck in the band, working like a galley-slave at his great task of creating modern France. Everywhere the king is master and must be obeyed — everywhere! If my lord of the castle defies the king, off goes his head. If the citizen of

the town refuses to pay the royal tax, up goes the gibbet. Let the proudest noble in the realm disobey the king, and the day will come when his life shall answer for it; let the humblest hind in France refuse obedience, and he will be sewed up in a sack and tossed into the river.

He will laugh and talk with you in the pleasantest fashion in the world, will Louis; and he will then feed fishes with you if you dare to cross his will.

Dress counted for nothing with Louis; often he was clad more shabbily than any man in his train.

Birth and blood went for nothing with Louis.

"Can he do my work?" was the supreme test to which he put all men. Through all his struggles, and to the end of his life, the men he most trusted were those of humble birth.

Very superstitious was Louis, so much so that he would never wear again the clothes he might have on when he received any piece of bad news. You might swear him upon the Word of God, and pledge him in the name of all the saints, — and he would wriggle forth from the contract at his earliest convenience; but if you swore him by St. Lo, he would stick.

Historians have denied that Louis was a great man. With one accord they decry him as a beast unclean. I judge this monarch by the work he did, and I dare to say that I find him great.

Never once do I find him destroying the faithful servants of France. The men he crushes are those who plotted against France while eating her bread and wearing her livery.

He strikes down the mad Duke of Burgundy, but patriotism demands it. Charles has invited the English

back into France and is thus a traitor to his king and his country.

Louis may have poisoned his brother; "no one thought him incapable of it." But that brother had proven false to France, and was a helpless tool in the hands of the feudal lords who wished to reëstablish their own tyranny over the king and over the people.

A bad man, say the historians, was Louis. So he was. His methods were underhand, his temper cruel, his disposition naturally full of guile and treachery; but it required, perhaps, just such a combination of qualities as Louis possessed to do the work he was fated to do.

Consider France as he left it! The printing-presses he established are at work, clumsily weaving the web of a new civilization. The schools are making headway, under royal encouragement. Commerce is spreading itself into other lands, and has already become well established in far Egypt. Post-horses stand, ready saddled, at regular intervals of four leagues on the highways, to gallop forward with letters. The common people have been called into the councils of the king, the towns elect their own magistrates and appoint the officers of their own guard. One hundred and ninety of their delegates go to the national congress when the king summons the States General. At home his power is supreme; abroad his alliance is courted, his enmity feared.

To admit that Louis did all this in a short reign of twenty-one years, and yet deny him greatness, seems to me the folly of mere prejudice.

He died praying. "My Lady of Embrun, my good mistress, have mercy on me," were his last words as he sank into the great unknown. A.D. 1483

CHAPTER XIX

ANNE OF FRANCE AND CHARLES THE EIGHTH

A.D. 1483 LOUIS XI. left three children surviving him. Six days before he died he verbally directed that the guardianship of his son and successor should be intrusted to his oldest daughter, "Anne of France," of whom he had said, "She is the least fool of all women, for wise one there is none." She much resembled her father in coldness, craft, persistence, and practical sense. Without having any strictly legal right to do so Anne quietly took up the reins of government, and during the eight years she held them fairly earned the title of "Madame the Great."

Her brother, the young king, known as Charles VIII., was only thirteen years of age at this time, and was mentally and physically feeble. His father had kept him in ignorance of all things; it was said that he could not even read, and although he was by law capable of taking the reins of government at fourteen years of age, his pupilage continued till he was past twenty-one. The other daughter of Louis XI., a deformed and ugly princess, was married to Louis, Duke of Orleans. He was first prince of the blood, heir presumptive to the crown, and a natural claimant of the regency which Anne had usurped. Supported by other members of the royal family, he disputed the authority of Anne and became the leader of an

aristocratic reaction against the system of Louis XI., which Anne was continuing. She endeavoured to placate the nobles by granting them high offices, great estates, and lavish pensions. She also consented to disarm the king by dismissing the six thousand Swiss mercenaries whom Louis XI. had kept in his pay. All alienations of the royal domains made by the late king were revoked. His "evil counsellors" were seized, tried, and punished. His former enemies were restored and rewarded. Some traitors whom he had punished were rehabilitated, and their relatives compensated by a restitution of the confiscated estates of the condemned. One-fourth of the land-tax due was remitted, exiles were recalled, and political prisoners liberated. But the princes of the blood-royal and the great feudal lords were bent upon recovering the ground they had lost during the reign of Louis XI., and, finding themselves unable to oust Anne in any other way, they agitated for a convocation of the States General. A.D. 1484 This was a demand which was always popular with the great majority of the French people, and, yielding to the public sentiment aroused by the lords, Anne convoked the States General of 1484.

All the provinces sent deputies. Each order, the clergy, the nobility, and the commons, sent its own representatives, elected in local assemblies, in which even the peasants took part. This was the first time that the peasants had been admitted to the privilege of voting for national representatives.

In most towns the commons united with the nobles and the clergy in choosing delegates. No conflict between the three orders appeared.

The delegates, to the number of 284, assembled in the

great hall of the archbishop's palace, at Tours, January 15, 1484.

The young king, seated upon the throne, presided; at his right hand sat the constable, at his left the chancellor. Between these high officers and the throne stood four great nobles; immediately in the rear sat two cardinals, six ecclesiastical peers, and six princes of the blood-royal. Behind these stood some twenty lay lords. In front of the king, on a lower level, the remaining deputies were seated upon two semicircular benches, the nobles and clergy on the front bench, the commons on the rear one.

The chancellor harangued the assembly at length, expressing the king's desire to become better acquainted with his people, and assuring the deputies of the royal desire to live economically, rule justly, and to reform existing abuses. He said that the king intended to defray all his personal expenses out of the revenues of the royal domains, and to exact tribute from the people for public expenses only.

The monstrous theory that all the property in France was the private estate of the king, to be spent as the monarch might see fit, had not yet come into existence. The deputies formed themselves into six committees, corresponding to the six great provinces of France. There was no division of the members into separate orders. They acted together, chose a common spokesman, and developed no spirit of strife as between the three orders. The nobles had complaints to make against the encroachment of the crown, but none against clergy or commons. The clergy demanded the freedom of the French Church from royal and papal aggressions, but made no attack

upon nobles or commons. The commons arraigned the crown for levying arbitrary taxes, the increase of public burdens, the quartering of troops in private houses, and the exclusion of the people from any share in governments; but the commons brought no accusations against the clergy or the nobility.

In this States General of 1484 the great principles of popular government were clearly and forcibly expressed. It is even more remarkable that the most prominent spokesmen in their favour were John Masselin, a priest, and Philip de la Roche, a noble.

This Burgundian peer, deputy for the nobility of Burgundy, spoke as boldly for republicanism as Count Mirabeau did three centuries later, — neither of them, however, being a republican, or favouring any policy inconsistent with the existence of the monarchy.

"I should like," said De la Roche, addressing the assembly, "to see you quite convinced that the government of the State is the people's affair. Since you are deputies, why are you afraid to conclude that you have been summoned to direct by your counsels the commonwealth during the king's minority? Why tremble at the idea of taking in hand the regulation, arrangement, and nomination of the council of the crown? You are here to say and to advise freely that which you believe to be useful to the realm. What is the obstacle that prevents you from accomplishing so excellent a work? I find none, unless it be your cowardice.

"Come, then, most illustrious lords, have confidence in yourselves, have hope, have courage, and let not the liberty of the estates which your ancestors defended so jealously be dangered by reason of your faint-heartedness."

Masselin followed in similar strains. The doctrine that in the people themselves lay the power of taxation was distinctly proclaimed, and the right of the crown to levy taxes was challenged and denied.

In the paper which set forth the grievances of the people against the government, it was declared that the citizens of several provinces in France had fled to Brittany and to England to escape the ruinous taxation which beggared them. "Others [so the paper read] have perished of hunger, and others, in their despair, have killed their wives and children, and afterwards themselves!"

Bad government trod the lives out of the people then, it treads the lives out of them now; the method has changed, but the spirit has not changed, nor the effects.

The paper from which we have already quoted proceeds to say:—

"Many whose cattle have been seized have harnessed themselves and their children to the plough; and many, to avoid seizure of their oxen, dare only to plough at night."

In the provinces of Anjou and Maine and in the district of Chartres, the deputies declared that more than 500 persons had been put to death within the last five years on the pretext that they had tried to evade the salt-tax. No delegate denied the truth of these recitals.

Indeed, one theologian, whose name is not given, fiercely denounced the taxes, which he called blackmail, declared that they were crushing the people, and called down the curse of God upon those who had caused such woes.

With this determined spirit abroad, it may seem strange that the States General of 1484 accomplished nothing. The explanation is that the great lords merely sought to check the king's encroachment upon themselves; they

had no intention of lightening the burdens of the commons. That the commons must be kept down was a principle of action upon which the higher nobles of both Church and State were cordially united.

When the delegates who favoured reform voted a tax of 1,200,000 livres, and for two years only, and demanded the convocation of the States General at the expiration of that term, all those who depended on the public crib for fodder became profoundly alarmed. They realized at once that the purse-strings would pass from the hands of the king, and that the taxes might be lessened from year to year. In that event, the king could no longer grant pensions and donations, pay extravagant salaries, or establish luxurious sinecures. Consequently the entire office-holding brotherhood, and all they who basked lazily in the sunshine of royal favour, broke forth into loud lamentations.

"We see quite well how it is," said these great lords, speaking, with the customary contempt, to the reformers; "you wish to curtail the king's power, to pare his nails to the quick; you forbid the subjects to pay as much as the wants of the State require; are the people no longer subjects? are they masters?"

"I know the rascals," said the Duke of Bourbon, alluding to the masses of the French people; "if they are not kept down by overweighting them, they will soon become insolent; for my part, I consider taxation as the surest way to hold them in."

Thus the antagonistic forces drew the lines as sharply then as they do now, and as they have ever done in all human governments. On the one hand is the spirit of caste, of privilege, of pride, whose innermost creed is, "I

am better than thou; I will rule over thee; thou shalt serve me, and obey me, and pay tribute to me."

When the patriotic priest, some poor curate of the rural districts, no doubt, had called down God's curse upon those who crushed the people with the load of unjust taxes, murmurs had been heard in the assembly. The brave speaker was rebuked on every hand and was finally silenced.

But when the Duke of Bourbon, a scion of the royal family, insolently proclaimed the doctrine that the masses must be kept down, and that taxation was the best method for doing it, his own class approved his speech and endorsed his policy.

The feudal lords understood quite well that the ancient methods of robbing the masses were out of date. They realized that bands of armed baronial marauders could no longer stop the merchant upon the highway and rob him, could no longer attack the town and hold it to ransom, could no longer swoop down upon hamlets and homes and drive away the cattle.

These feudal lords, being wise in their generation, saw that other means must be adopted, if the privileged few were to continue to live at the expense of the many.

The Duke of Bourbon was right when he said that taxation was the surest device that could be adopted, and he was right in contending that the king should continue to hold the power to levy and collect taxes at his pleasure.

Taxation, after all, is confiscation. When the government takes no more than its just dues, and exacts these from all classes alike, the evil is a necessary evil, the sacrifice a necessary sacrifice; for it is right that the government should live at the public expense.

But when the government confiscates more than it needs, this is tyranny; it is robbery under legal forms. If the government, in exacting this excessive tribute, should exempt certain persons and certain classes from payment, then the wrong becomes doubly intolerable to those who have all to pay. These wretched victims of an unjust system would not only have to bear the burdens of their own excessive taxes, but would also have to pay the shares of the exempted. To make matters still worse, those who are exempted are those who are ablest to pay. Now, let the wrong go one step further; let the privileged be salaried, pensioned, and sinecured, out of the tribute wrung from the unprivileged, and we have a government which will become as rotten, as cruel, as vicious, and as intolerable, as any that ever existed in the days of paganism.

This was precisely what Bourbon was driving at, precisely what Richelieu achieved, precisely what Louis XIV. enjoyed, precisely what went to pieces under Louis XVI., and precisely what now exists in all Christian lands. The form has changed, the methods have changed, but the spirit of privilege has not changed.

General conditions have immensely improved, but among the lower orders of our own time scenes of squalor, of ignorance, of suffering, constantly recur which equal in horror anything known of ancient days.

The States General of 1484 was in advance of the age. No political education had taken place among the masses, and there was no organization among the advocates of reform. The higher nobles stood together shoulder to shoulder, the higher clergy were likewise united, and all three of the orders were loyally devoted to the crown.

The princes of the blood-royal were quite ready to agitate for reforms which would limit the power of the crown in their own favour, and to the restoration of their own powers and privileges. They were even willing to remind the king that the crown had been formerly elective, but elective by the votes of the feudal lords. They clamoured against royal imposition of taxes, because this rendered the king independent of the old feudal aids. They demanded the dismissal of the hired troops, because this army secured the royal authority against feudal insubordination.

But when the peers of the realm realized that the spirit of reform was about to escape their control, and was threatening to take an opposite direction, they suddenly ceased to be reformers.

The States General thus became powerless. It could formally declare itself against all existing abuses, demand sweeping reforms, and establish the principles of a limited constitutional monarchy, but all this was on paper; no guarantees could be secured.

The king made the most soothing promises, in a general way; but his advisers were determined to make no changes, and were determined to get rid of the troublesome deputies at the earliest possible moment.

The courtiers set themselves to work among the deputies, bribing some, giving offices to some, persuading some, intimidating some, and sowing the seeds of discord among the representatives of the different provinces. Wrangles about the apportionment of the taxes were eagerly and adroitly fomented; and a bitter feud arose between the nobles and clergy on the one side, and the commons on the other, as to the pay of the deputies them-

selves. The nobles and the clergy contended that the commons should bear the entire expenses of the assembly; the commons, led on by demagogues, doubtless, claimed that the expense of their meeting should be borne by the three orders equally. After much squabbling, the commons prevailed.

But the deputies had now been away from home a long while, and they were growing tired. Their situation was not pleasant. They had quarrelled among themselves and split into factions. The royal party was compact, was sure of its purpose, had many resources, and was in position to use them. The reformers were divided; were not agreed upon a definite plan; were separated from their local supporters, their families, friends, and constituents; were subjected to the alternate frowns and blandishments of the court, and to the discouragement of seeing this or that patriot accept office or pension and become a royalist of the zealous, renegade type.

So great was the number of the deputies corrupted and browbeaten that the others lost heart. On March 12 the suave bishop of Coutances suggested that the work of reform could be carried out by a special committee appointed by the delegates of each province, and that, therefore, it was not necessary for the assembly itself to remain in session longer. Casually and incidentally, he also remarked that the king had decided that the pay of the delegates should stop on March 14.

These dismal tidings, naturally depressing to the homesick delegates, sorely perplexed them; and when, on March 14, they went into the hall of meeting and found it dismantled, — stripped of benches, carpet, curtains, tables, and all other paraphernalia necessary to deliberative com-

fort, — they were so completely demoralized that they hastily disbanded. It is true that they appointed the committee which the bishop of Coutances had suggested, but the court party, which had so easily gotten rid of the States General, had even less difficulty in getting rid of the committee.

None of the reforms demanded and promised were granted ; and the government calmly settled back to the policy of Louis XI. A Council of State had been constituted of which the Duke of Orleans was president. Thus he was nominally at the head of the government. In fact, however, Anne was the sovereign, as by her influence over her brother, the king, she caused him to preside over the Council, displacing Orleans, and directing the affairs of State as she advised.

A.D. 1485 Finding himself reduced to a nullity in this manner, Orleans began to conspire against the government. The duke himself was not a formidable person. There was a superficial showiness about him which made him a brilliant figure at court ; he was gay and gallant, liberal and generous ; good at a tournament and good at a ball ; genial with men and a rake among women.

But his intrigues against the government were dangerous because of the stronger men who made use of him, men like Dunois, Bourbon, Comines, and Orange. Anne became uneasy on account of the plots against her, and sent troops to arrest Orleans. He escaped, however, and took refuge in Brittany.

A.D. 1586 This province was the sole remaining independent principality of the old feudal France. Its duke, Francis II., espoused the cause of Orleans, as did Maximilian of Germany and Richard III. of England.

Anne was equal to the crisis. She kept Richard III. at home by assisting Henry of Richmond to cross over the Channel and claim the crown. Richmond's army met Richard at Bosworth, defeated and slew him, and Richmond became king of England under the name of Henry VII. He repaid his debt to France, some years later, by a peculiarly cold-blooded piece of ingratitude, as we shall see in due time. Maximilian was kept busy with his own affairs by an insurrection among the Flemings, his subjects, which Anne skilfully aided and abetted.

As to the Duke of Brittany, he was reduced to helplessness by the alliances which Anne contracted with his rebellious nobles.

The Duke of Orleans was captured, carried back to Court, and released upon his promise to intrigue no more against the government.

In 1488, Maximilian, having been chosen emperor of Germany, resolved to break the Treaty of Arras, which was distasteful to him; and the league of the princes against Anne was renewed.

Again she triumphed. Putting the young king at the head of his troops she carried war into the south, took Guienne from the Count of Comines, and checked Maximilian in Artois. Everywhere the citizens of the middle class gave hearty aid to the king against the nobles. A.D. 1487

Having quieted the south, Anne directed her forces into Brittany. La Trémouille, the French commander, entered the province in April, 1488. After taking several towns he met the combined army of the confederated princes at St. Aubin du Cormier, and routed it. The Duke at Orleans, the Prince of Orange, and many French nobles were captured; and the ruin of the cause was complete. A.D. 1488

La Trémouille was a very able captain, and was not more brutal, perhaps, than other professional soldiers of his own era. And this is what he did with his noble prisoners : —

He spread a feast for them and invited them to his table. The invitation was a command, and they came. Trémouille sat down with his guests, and did the honours of his board. Bread he broke with them, salt he tasted with them, wine he drank with them. The banquet went on, as most banquets do, and there were jests and laughter, cordial exchange of courtesies, and many a pleasant word on congenial topics, past and present, many a light reference to joyous days to come.

At length the feast drew to its end. Suddenly two black-gowned priests entered the banquet-hall. The guests were stupefied, were dumb with dread forebodings. A hush fell upon them all. Trémouille arose, and facing the trembling prisoners, said : —

" Princes, I refer your sentence to the king ; but as for you, chevaliers, you who have broken faith and violated your knightly vow, you must pay for your crime with your heads. If you have any sins to confess, here are monks ready to receive your confessions."

The nobles were paralyzed with terror, groans resounded through the hall, the knights fell at the knees of the princes, begging intercession, pleading for life, life ! The princes, who had led the lesser lords into their treason, could say nothing, could do nothing. They were horror-stricken.

Standing grimly inexorable among the guests he had so sumptuously feasted, Trémouille ordered in his guards, had the struggling victims dragged from the hall, and murdered in the courtyard.

The princes suffered nothing more than a brief confinement in prison.

The Duke of Orleans richly deserved a traitor's death. He had not only rebelled against the king, but had leagued himself with the enemies of France, and had sought to bring foreign armies against her. He was a prince of the blood-royal, however, and the utmost that Anne dared do to him was to shut him up in the great tower of Bourges, where at night he was locked in an iron cage. He remained there only three years, being released at the persistent entreaty of his neglected but affectionate wife, whose devotion he was to reward with cruel ingratitude later.

By the victory of St. Aubin, Anne was freed from all peril, and, after a little more skirmishing in Brittany, she made, with Duke Francis, the Treaty of Sablè, August, A.D. 1488. To hold the duke to his contract, she exacted a bond of 200,000 golden crowns and kept possession of four of the Breton fortresses.

Three weeks after the Treaty of Sablé, Duke Francis died, leaving as his heir his daughter Anne.

Her marriage became a question of international importance, and her hand was sought by numerous suitors. She had been promised in marriage, when only four years old, to the son of Edward IV. of England — he who was murdered in the Tower of London by his wicked uncle, Richard III.

As the Breton princess grew older, the aspirants to her hand multiplied, and among them were the Sire d'Albret, the richest lord in France, the Viscount de Rohan, the Emperor Maximilian, and King Charles VIII.

Anne of France realized the importance of uniting this

last of the great feudal fiefs to the crown. She, therefore, determined to exert every energy to secure the hand of the Princess of Brittany for her brother.

Charles VIII. was not exactly the man to arouse violent love at first sight. He was short, and badly put together. His head was unnecessarily big, and his eyes were of the kind which, among the plebeians, causes the owner to be called pop-eyed. His nose was thick and large, his lips coarse, and his mouth was everlastingly open. When he spoke, his words came slowly, and did not amount to much after they came. There were nervous twitchings about his face which were disagreeable to see.

Altogether his Majesty seems to have been the kind of man whom we prefer should eat at some other table, and in a different room.

But his sister Anne set all her wits to work to bring about a marriage between the repulsive and ignorant king and the young Princess of Brittany — a bright, pretty, self-willed, and cultivated lady.

There were two obstacles in Anne's way which might have disconcerted any one less resolute than the favourite daughter of Louis XI.

One was that Charles VIII. was already married. The other was that the Breton princess was already married.

By his union with Mary of Burgundy, Maximilian had a daughter named Marguerite, who had been given as a wife to Charles VIII.; and she was even now living in France awaiting the time when her age would permit the marriage to be consummated.

After the death of Mary of Burgundy, Maximilian had become a suitor for the hand of Anne of Brittany, as

has already been stated. He was only twenty-nine years old, magnificent in stature, brave in war, and a man of some culture and ability. Anne inclined so strongly toward him that, in 1489, she married him by proxy — the Count of Nassau acting for Maximilian. The bridegroom himself couldn't come, because he was busy with a Hungarian war. It probably did not occur to him that his bride would not stay married till the war was over, else he might have yielded a point or two, made peace, and come home in time to keep his son-in-law from marrying his wife. At all events, he did not return, and the French party pressed the suit of their king with eagerness and good judgment. The French troops still occupied portions of Brittany, and they received orders to advance. War as well as love was waged against the young princess. The French king besieged her heart and her towns with equal pertinacity. Finally the French troops laid siege to Rennes, the very town in which the princess dwelt, and she was about to fall into Charles' hands as a prisoner of war. A.D. 1491

What should she do? Maximilian was far away fighting Hungarians, Charles was there present fighting Bretons, but offering to marry the Breton princess. Should she become a captive and disinherited princess, or should she become a crowned and sceptred queen?

In such a dilemma, the French marriage became a necessity, and the princess yielded. Her contract with Maximilian and Charles' contract with Marguerite were annulled by the Church, and Anne of Brittany became queen of France, — but no historian pretends that she was ever fond of Charles. A.D. 1491

The little German Princess Marguerite, who for eight

years had been waiting in France to become the king's wife, was sent home to her father, Maximilian.

If ever a monarch had just cause to grumble, it was this Maximilian. The French king had not only insulted him by returning his daughter, but had poisoned the wound by marrying his wife. Maximilian began to make preparations for a war of revenge.

After the battle of Fontenoy in 1745, Louis XV. visited Brussels, and was taken to see the tombs of the old Burgundian rulers, Charles the Bold, and Mary, his daughter, and Marguerite, his granddaughter.

"There lie the causes of all our wars," said the French king. He spoke the truth. The unscrupulous dishonesty with which Louis XI. and Charles VIII. treated Mary of Burgundy and Marguerite was the origin of the furious hatred which sprang up between the royal houses of France and Austria. Wars ensued, — pitiless wars, — in which a million or more people of the inferior sort lost their lives in fighting out this ancient royal quarrel which in no way concerned them.

The match between Charles and Anne of Brittany was the last great achievement of "Anne of France," and she withdrew from state affairs, devoting herself to the duties of her private station.

A.D. 1491 Charles VIII. was now (1491) the most powerful monarch in Europe. Brittany having been brought under royal authority, France was more compact, more wealthy, and more formidable than any single state on the continent.

Charles was twenty-two years old, and was just weak enough to believe he had done it all himself, that his prowess had subdued rebellion, and his policy had secured his brilliant marriage.

Intoxicated by his own greatness, he began to dream dreams. He longed to rival the glories of Charlemagne. He resolved to assert his claims to the throne of Naples; and, after securing it, he meant to pass into Greece, liberate that oppressed people, expel the intrusive Turk from Constantinople, rescue the Holy Sepulchre, and astonish mankind generally.

His sister Anne had not lost her good sense, and she advised the king against these fine schemes; so did his wisest counsellors and warriors. But Charles was in the first flush of youth, was surrounded by ardent young men eager for adventures, and the war party prevailed.

Some heavy sacrifices had to be made to his neighbours before the French king could feel safe in leaving home.

To keep Ferdinand of Spain quiet, Roussillon and Cardagna had to be given up to him.

To pacify Maximilian the provinces of Artois, Charolais, and Franche-Comté were ceded. These provinces had constituted the dowry of Marguerite, and Charles, who had repudiated Marguerite, had neglected to return her dowry.

Considering it a good time to show his gratitude to Charles for aiding him to win the English throne, Henry VII., formerly Henry of Richmond, outcast and prisoner, now invaded France, and laid siege to Boulogne.

Charles bought him off by the promise of 745,000 crowns of gold.

Having pacified these rulers at such immense cost to the kingdom, Charles VIII. now set forward upon his expedition to Italy. It was a fine army of 50,000 men which moved toward the Alps in August, 1494, and crossed over in the early days of September. A.D. 1494

The historian of Charles VIII., M. de Cherrier, relates the following incident : —

"On the 8th of September, 1494, Charles VIII. started from Grenoble, crossed Mount Genèvre, and slept at Onlex in Piedmont. In the evening a peasant, who was accused of being one of the Vaudois, was brought before him. The king gave him audience, and then handed him over to the provost, who had him hanged on a tree."

The Vaudois were Christians who had renounced the rule of the Catholic Church. Such people deserved death on general principles, and it was for this reason that Charles VIII., a good Catholic, had the wretched peasant summarily hanged.

The invaders of Italy met but slight resistance. In fact, they had been invited to come by certain Italian princes and politicians, who had designs of their own to further. At this time Italy was split into jealous and contending dukedoms, principalities, kingdoms, and republics. Separately none of them was able to resist the French. Therefore, Charles' march was a mere military parade. Every little potentate met the great king with cap in hand, and bowed him onward, as speedily as possible, toward Naples.

Ludovico Sforza, regent of the duchy of Milan, was one of those who had urged Charles to undertake the expedition. He met the king most cordially, opened a passage through the territories of Milan for the French troops, and thus earned, it was said, the privilege of hastening, by poison, the death of his own nephew, the Duke of Milan, whose crown he at once seized. Charles became distrustful of Ludovico, and rejected further proposals from him, thus making a dangerous foe. Passing through

Lombardy, the French troops entered the territories of Florence. Several small towns which offered resistance were taken, and were treated with atrocious cruelty. At this the head of the Florentine republic, Piero de' Medici, became terrified, and made humiliating concessions to the French king. This so enraged the people of Florence that they rose against the Medici and drove them out.

The famous priest, Savonarola, was the master-spirit in Florence at this time, and he hailed the French invasion with joy. In his eyes Charles VIII. was an instrument in the hands of God, a scourge for the princes of Italy.

At the head of a delegation, Savonarola went out from Florence to meet the invader, and invite him to enter the city.

Charles entered accordingly, but he misunderstood the situation entirely. He conceived himself to be a conqueror, whereas the Florentines had opened their gates to him as an ally, a friend. Acting upon his view of the matter, Charles attempted to impose certain harsh conditions upon Florence. An uproar at once ensued. "Sound your trumpets," cried Pietro Capponi to the French king, "and we will ring our bells." He snatched the paper in which the French demands were set forth, tore it up before the king's eyes, and rushed out to arouse the people. The Florentines flew to arms, and Charles gave way. He recalled Capponi, and friendly terms were soon arranged.

From Florence Charles proceeded to Rome. Alexander VI., the ever infamous Borgia, was then Pope. He was extremely anxious that the invaders should not enter the Holy City. On the other hand, Charles was exceedingly anxious to enter, and he did so. The cardinals

and the nobles received the French as liberators, and urged them to depose the Pope.

Upon leaving Rome, Charles took with him, as hostage of the Pope's fidelity, Cæsar Borgia, the Pope's son; but the brilliant and slippery young man soon made his escape.

Charles now advanced toward Naples. It fell almost without a blow. The reigning house was so intensely unpopular that it was betrayed and deserted on all sides, and the king, Ferdinand II., fled to the island of Ischia.

A.D. 1495 Charles VIII. entered the city of Naples in triumph (1495) at the head of his troops, the people scattering flowers before him, and cheering him enthusiastically. As he rode forward, he was sheltered by a canopy of cloth of gold, borne by four great Neapolitan lords. Once within the city, the French abandoned themselves to its pleasures. It was another Capua. King Charles was delighted. He enjoyed the palaces and the gardens; the trees, the flowers, and the fountains; the feastings and the revelries; the wine and the women. Never was a monarch better pleased with himself and with his surroundings. He lingered on, day after day, week after week, month after month, tasting every joy of the licentious southern city. Not satisfied with the splendour of his triumphal entry, he must needs do it all over again. So he went outside and entered once more — this time bearing the proud titles of "King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem." Again he rode under a golden canopy borne by Neapolitan lords, wearing a crown on his head, carrying a sceptre in one hand, a golden globe in the other, and attended by a brilliant concourse of French and Neapolitan cavaliers, as he slowly paraded through all the principal streets of Naples.

A few days afterwards he set forth upon his return to France, leaving Gilbert of Bourbon behind in command of the French garrisons. It was high time that Charles should be getting out of Italy. A formidable league had been formed against him by all the Italian states, led by Ludovico, Duke of Milan, and his Holiness, Pope Alexander VI. This league had the active and powerful support of the neighbours whose good will Charles supposed he had bought; Ferdinand, Maximilian, and Henry VII. of England. The proposition of the league was to cut off the retreat of the French king, and they came so near doing it that the conquering hero, Charles, had to fight desperately for the privilege of getting back home. Owing to the generalship of La Trémouille, and the courage of the French troops, the battle of Fornova was a victory, and the king was enabled to continue his retreat without further molestation. A.D. 1495

At the battle of Fornova the Chevalier Bayard first attracted honourable notice by his impetuous gallantry. Barely twenty years of age, he had two horses killed under him, and captured a standard, which he presented to the king, who gave him five hundred crowns.

Once at home again, Charles VIII. took good care to stay there. It is true that he continued to dream of Italian conquests, but his intention was that some one else should lead the invasion. He was anxious that the Duke of Orleans should go, but the duke much preferred to remain in France, and the king did not insist.

Ferdinand of Spain sent Gonsalvo de Cordova against the French in Naples, and the country was rapidly recovered. Charles VIII. was occupied with his pleasures, and he sent neither men nor money to the com-

manders he had left to hold his conquests in Italy. They lost place after place for sheer lack of supplies and reënforcements. Soon the Spaniards were masters of the entire kingdom. The fugitive Neapolitan king, Ferdinand II., then suddenly became the popular favourite in Naples and was welcomed back to the throne enthusiastically, by the same people who had enthusiastically welcomed Charles VIII. Thus the French lost all they had gained, excepting a vicious foreign policy which was to cost millions of treasure and thousands of lives.

Charles VIII. lived three years after his return from Italy, and, according to the historian Comines, "he set his imagination to live according to the commandments of God."

He reduced the taxes to 1,200,000 francs, defrayed the balance of his expenses out of his private estate, and gave ear to all complaints of his people against those in authority.

A.D. 1498 In April, 1498, while passing out of a dark gallery in the castle of Amboise, he struck his head against the top of the doorway so violently that he died a few hours afterwards, at the age of twenty-eight.

With Charles VIII. the direct line of Valois became extinct.

His widow, Anne of Brittany, as a sign of mourning adopted black, — white having been the colour for royal mourning before that time, — and the change became permanent. This queen was the first who ever had a separate court of her own, a body-guard, and an organized household of maids of honour, whose salaries were paid out of the public funds.

CHAPTER XX

LOUIS THE TWELFTH

CHARLES VIII. left no children, and the crown was inherited by the next prince of the blood-royal, Louis, Duke of Orleans,—he of the rebellions and the iron cage. A.D. 1498

Under the name of Louis XII., the new king made a happy beginning of his reign by reducing the taxes, declining to accept the usual coronation dues, and by magnanimously stating that he, as king, would not avenge injuries done to him while Duke of Orleans.

Mentally and morally Louis XII. was rather a weak man, unstable and unwise; but he was really concerned for the welfare of the French people, and under his mild, economical administration they prospered.

It was his good fortune to have the assistance of an able, honest, and patriotic minister, Cardinal Amboise. Guided by this wise and humane counsellor, Louis introduced many reforms, corrected many abuses, and well earned the title of "The Father of his People."

The taxes were reduced to nearly one-third, viz., to about 68,000,000 francs, or $13,600,000. The personal and household expenses of the king were met by the revenues of his royal domains. No pensions and gratuities granted to court favourites absorbed the income of the State. The public money was scrupulously used for

public purposes. The court was inexpensive, the king's habits simple; and when his cash ran short, on account of his foreign wars, he did not, at first, levy additional taxes upon the people; he sold portions of his property, and thus got the necessary money.

Such a government as this was most distasteful to the courtiers, and they ridiculed the king's miserly methods. In reply to their jeers, he is credited with a very noble utterance: "I had rather make the courtiers laugh by my stinginess, than my people weep by my extravagance."

In the administration of justice he made some useful reforms. He reduced the costs of litigation, supplanted the Latin language, still used in criminal proceedings, by the French, and abolished the sale of judicial offices. He directed that the judges should select three persons from whom the king should choose the appointee for each judicial vacancy. No judge was allowed to accept any place or pension from any noble, under penalty of loss of salary or office.

The ordinance of Charles VIII., creating a supreme court composed of the chancellor and twenty councillors, was carried into effect. It strengthened and regulated the royal authority, and introduced many wise reforms in legislation, consequently it drew upon itself the hostility of the Sorbonne.

This Sorbonne was at first only a theological university, wherein certain doctors of divinity exercised their faculties, to more or less advantage, in studying and teaching theological subtleties.

It was the only thing of the kind in France, and it soon became an authority. Difficult questions which vexed the understanding of the untutored and uninitiated were

referred to the Sorbonne for unravelment, and the decisions rendered became conclusive in regard to the issues raised.

For example, the Sorbonne had been consulted three times about Joan of Arc, and had decided first that she was not a witch — whereupon she went gloriously to the wars and drove out the English. Again the question was sprung, and the Sorbonne decided that Joan *was* a witch — whereupon she was burned.

Finally, the issue was once more raised, and the Sorbonne decided that Joan was *not* a witch — whereupon she was rehabilitated.

Finding its decisions respected in this gratifying manner, the Sorbonne gradually extended the bounds of its self-given jurisdiction, and took cognizance of questions judicial and political. Tax-collectors and magistrates were constantly finding themselves obstructed by the doctors of divinity. If the officers of State refused to hearken to the Sorbonne, those astute theologians declared a suspension of preaching and teaching and thus brought about something of a deadlock — for of course an orthodox state could not administer fiscal and judicial matters if the preaching was shut off.

The Roman augurs had a similar habit of stopping the wheels of State, as the Sorbonne, perhaps, knew, by gazing fixedly at the heavens and solemnly declaring that they were not propitious. Julius Cæsar was the first who had the courage to disregard this priestly veto to public business in Rome; and to Louis XII. belongs the honour of putting an end to it in France.

Although the Sorbonne formally and solemnly condemned the new court and its reforms, the king and

Cardinal Amboise stood firm. In vain the Sorbonne pronounced a suspension of study and of preaching. The king reprimanded the divine doctors sharply, and, at the end of eight months, they gave up the contest.

Thus we have seen that the domestic administration of Louis XII. was creditable to him and beneficial to his people. They prospered under it. Commerce and agriculture developed wonderfully. The roads were safe, traders became rich, the farmers cleared immense tracts of land for cultivation, rents advanced, and the peasants, freed from the depredations of the soldiers, blessed the good king and his wise minister.

In these measures of reform we see the harvest of the seed sown by the States General of 1484; so true it is that the principles of right, once given to the world, live and find advocates from age to age.

Clearly as Louis XII. deserves praise for his domestic administration, he deserves unqualified censure for his
A.D. 1499 foreign policy. Even his marriage with Anne of Brittany, widow of the late king, was a questionable step, for the marriage settlement did not irrevocably unite that province to France, as historians usually declare. On the other hand Brittany was to descend to the second child of Anne, if children should be born, and in default of a second child, to her next heir. This marriage, therefore, was more immediately in the interest of the greatness of Louis than of France.

To prepare himself for this union with Anne of Brittany, Louis had to renounce his wife Joan, whose only defect was an extreme ugliness. Only the Pope could annul the marriage, but the vicegerent of Christ on earth, at this time, was Alexander VI., the depraved

Borgia, and the matter was successfully negotiated. Bribes, direct and indirect, were skilfully used; and in spite of Joan's resistance she was put aside by concert of action between an ungodly Pope and an unscrupulous husband. The decree of divorce was brought to France by Cæsar Borgia, the Pope's bastard son, to whom the king granted the title and the duchy of Valentinois.

A very remarkable man was this Cæsar Borgia — handsome, fearless, accomplished, subtle, daring, treacherous, unprincipled, merciless, ambitious, and indefatigable. His father made him a cardinal while he was yet in his teens, then relieved him of his honour and granted him a principality. By one bold stroke after another, Cæsar rose into a power which seemed to promise the realization of his dream — Italian unity. His father, the Pope, was his chief support, and this support suddenly failed him.

A certain cardinal, Corneto by name, had become objectionable to the Pope and his son Cæsar, and Cæsar therefore invited him to a friendly meal with them, the design being to have him drink poison unawares during the progress of the friendly entertainment. By an accident the Pope and his son drank the poisoned wine which they had intended for their guest. The Pope died, Cæsar barely survived, and was thus rendered helpless at the most critical period of his fortunes. The new Pope was his mortal enemy, and his foes combined against him while he was still prostrated from the effects of the poison. Stripped of all his possessions, he was cast into prison, first by the Venetians, and then handed over to the Spaniards. After two years' confinement he escaped, joined the army of his brother-in-law, the king of Navarre, and was killed in a skirmish with the Spaniards.

The grandmother of Louis XII. was Valentina Visconti, wife of that Duke of Orleans whom John the Fearless of Burgundy had caused to be assassinated in the streets of Paris. Through this grandmother, Louis laid claim to the duchy of Milan, — which duchy, being a fief-male, his grandmother could not have held.

However, Louis thought he had at least as good a title as that of Ludovico Sforza, who had usurped the duchy, after poisoning a nephew who had usurped it previously. To drive out Sforza and take possession of the Milanese,
A.D. 1499 the French king (1499) sent an army over the Alps, and subdued the duchy in twenty days.

The administration of the French governor, however, was so unpopular that in a few months the Milanese revolted, and Sforza was reinstated.

Louis sent another army, under La Trémouille, and it
A.D. 1500 encountered the forces of Sforza, near Novara, April, 1500. The principal strength of both armies was the Swiss contingent; naturally these troops were reluctant to fight each other. To avoid so unpleasant a necessity, the Swiss of Sforza's army laid hands upon him, and delivered him over to the French.

Louis XII. put him in prison, in France, and there he died many years afterwards.

The Pope Alexander VI. had been friendly to the French conquest of Milan, and now by way of compensation, Louis assisted Cæsar Borgia to conquer the Romagna.

Having succeeded so well against Sforza, the French king turned his attention to Naples, where Frederick III. was ruler. Louis did not wish to involve himself in a war with Spain, to whose aid the Neapolitan kings owed

their reinstatement, and he therefore proposed to Ferdinand the Catholic, king of Spain, a friendly division of the coveted territory.

Now Ferdinand the Catholic was one of the craftiest knaves that ever lived. In all the long line of hypocrites who have used religion as a cloak for rascality there has never been a greater than he.

Consequently Louis XII. made a lamentable blunder when he formed a copartnership of crime with so expert a professional as Ferdinand. It was well-nigh inevitable that Louis should emerge from the business with some slight addition to his experience, but with nothing more —excepting the shame of showing willingness to be a criminal without the ability to profit thereby.

Ferdinand the Catholic readily agreed to the infamous bargain offered him by Louis, and the two royal robbers committed to writing the terms of the compact by which they were jointly to despoil the king of Naples of his dominions. They put the seal of religion upon the transaction by securing from his Holiness, the Pope, a formal decree authorizing the division agreed upon.

The victim of the plot, Frederick III., suspected that A.D. 1501
Louis XII. harboured designs against him, and he applied to Ferdinand for help. He never once suspected that Ferdinand was in league with Louis. The Spanish king readily agreed to give the desired aid, and Gonsalvo de Cordova, "the Great Captain," was sent to furnish it.

The unsuspecting Frederick joyfully welcomed the Spanish troops, and put them into possession of the strongest fortresses of Naples. He had hardly done so when the information reached him that Ferdinand and Louis had conspired to rob him. His amazement was

extreme. In his despair, he did not strike a blow for his throne, but surrendered himself to the generosity of the French king.

Louis treated him royally, giving him a pension of 30,000 livres, and the county of Maine, where he died in 1504.

A.D. 1502 The kingdom of Naples was now in possession of the Spaniards and the French. It only remained that the robbers should peaceably divide the spoil. This they could not do, for the reason that Ferdinand the Catholic had intended all along that the French should not have any. He wanted it all for himself, and he got it. His army, under Gonsalvo, defeated the French in two battles, and the Spaniards were masters of the kingdom of Naples.

Greatly incensed at the conduct of Ferdinand, Louis determined to punish him. Two French armies were sent against Spain itself, and one against Gonsalvo in Naples.

A.D. 1503 These efforts failed. The invasion of Spain did not prosper, and the army sent against Gonsalvo was disastrously routed upon the Garigliano — a defeat redeemed only by the heroic courage with which the Chevalier Bayard alone defended the bridge against the Spaniards.

Ferdinand the Catholic remained unpunished. His conception of the moralities may be faintly seen in a remark he made concerning Louis XII. : —

"The king of France complains that I have deceived him twice ; he lies, the drunkard, — I have deceived him more than ten times."

A.D. 1504 The enemies of Louis XII. were preparing to take Milan from him also, when he averted the danger by the Treaties of Blois (1504). By the first of these Louis

entered into a compact with Maximilian, emperor of Germany, to conquer and divide the republic of Venice; by the second he agreed to pay Maximilian 200,000 francs in return for the investiture of Milan; by the third he agreed that his daughter Claude should wed Maximilian's grandson, afterwards Charles V., and carry to him as dowry the three French provinces of Burgundy, Brittany, and Blois. This last was an insane treaty, and Louis took the first opportunity of shuffling out of it. According to some authorities, Anne of Brittany, the queen, was responsible for it. She was more Breton than French, fonder of her daughter than of France, and persuaded her husband into an engagement to dismember his kingdom in the interest of his daughter.

As soon as this treaty became noised abroad, intense opposition to it arose. The nobles inflamed public sentiment by holding public meetings in all parts of France. The king was asked to call the States General together, and he did so. It met at Tours, May 10, 1506.

The deputies, through their spokesman, Thomas Bricot, addressed the king in the most dutiful language, praising him for the many beneficent reforms he had effected. They thanked him for taxes reduced, justice honestly administered, peace and security restored, and private property respected. They hailed him "Father of his People." A.D. 1506

"At these words," says the historian, "cheers rang out, emotion was general, and the king himself shed tears." Then the deputies dropped on their knees and begged the king to give his daughter in marriage to the French prince, Francis of Angoulême, heir presumptive to the throne.

After some hesitation the king did as he was asked, and the betrothal was at once celebrated. Not until these nuptials did Brittany finally become irrevocably united to France.

Ferdinand and Maximilian were not prepared just then to punish Louis for his violation of the Treaty of Blois, and they made no protest.

A.D. 1507 At this time (1507) the republic of Genoa was subject to France. It disgusted the feudal lords of that country very much to see the common people exercising power in conjunction with the nobility. The French citizens of Genoa, supported by their government, became intolerably offensive and threatening in their behaviour toward the Genoese, who thereupon revolted and expelled the French. Louis XII. vowed vengeance — Genoa being small enough — and marched against the city with a fine army. Genoa was no match for France, and the little republic was an easy prey. Louis XII. hanged seventy-nine of the principal citizens, and ruined the balance by inflicting a fine of 300,000 florins upon them.

Another republic was now to feel the weight of Louis' arm. Venice had been his ally in his former campaign in Italy, and had given him no cause of quarrel whatever. It was a barrier to France against Germany, and good policy as well as principle should have inclined Louis to cultivate the Venetian alliance.

Venice, however, was a republic, was rich, offered tempting booty to the greedy royal marauders, and the

A.D. 1508 neighbouring kings combined to despoil her. Louis XII., Ferdinand the Catholic, and the Emperor Maximilian were the parties to this most unholy combination. Pope Julius II. not only sanctioned the enterprise, but proclaimed an

interdict against the republic of Venice, her magistrates, her citizens, and her defenders. In other words, his Holiness called down the divine wrath upon the intended victims of royal spoliation in case they failed to submit with due meekness to the will of the robbers. The compact between the Pope and the kings already named is known to history as the League of Cambray (1508).

The French army, 20,000 strong, immediately invaded the Venetian territories. In May, 1509, the battle of Agnadello was fought, the French king gaining a decisive victory. Town after town fell into his hands, and he treated the vanquished with remorseless cruelty. All was lost to the republic, save Venice itself. Inaccessible in the midst of the lagoons, it defied the invaders, and patiently prepared to continue the struggle when discord should have broken out among the allies. A.D. 1509

Louis XII. soon returned to France, leaving his troops under Trémouille, Trivulzio, Bayard, and others to defend their conquest.

Pope Julius, "the warrior pope," had already accomplished his purpose, and was ready to withdraw from the League. He had received the humble submission of Venice, had removed the papal excommunication, had been greatly softened by the cession of certain Venetian territory to the papal domains, and he now formed a treaty with the Venetians, the Swiss, and Ferdinand the Catholic, to drive the French out of Italy. The conspiracy which these recent confederates of the French king formed against their common friend was called the "Holy League." Their united forces at once attacked the French, but Gaston de Foix, nephew of Louis XII., gained some brilliant triumphs over the League. At A.D. 1511

A.D. 1512 Ravenna (1512) he won a great victory over the allies, but lost his life in recklessly pursuing, unattended, a retreating body of Spaniards. With the death of this heroic young chief, he was only twenty-three, terminated the successes of Louis XII. in Italy.

It greatly embarrassed an orthodox Catholic, like Louis XII., to wage war against the head of the Church. To compel the Pope to sue for peace, the French encouraged the schismatic cardinals who were holding a council at Pisa. These partisans of Louis and Maximilian had (on paper) suspended Julius II. in the exercise of papal power, but he, being well named "the warrior pope," rose defiantly to the danger, excommunicated the French king, assembled eighty-three bishops from all parts of Christendom in the Lateran Council, secured their formal acknowledgment of his pontificate, and thus threw the Council of Pisa into hopeless discredit.

Disasters fell fast upon Louis. Genoa revolted, Ferdinand conquered Navarre, Bologna fell, and the Swiss reinstated in the duchy of Milan, Maximilian Sforza, son of the Ludovico Sforza whom the Swiss had betrayed some years before. After the battle of Novara (1513), where Sforza and the Swiss routed the French under Trémouille and Trivulzio, Louis XII. held not a single possession beyond the Alps.

A.D. 1513

Julius II., "the warrior pope," did not live to enjoy all this good news: he died in 1513. His policy had rescued Italy from France, only to throw it into the hands of Spain, thus changing masters and going from bad to worse.

The enemies of France now invaded her. The Swiss,

the Spaniards, and the English all pressed Louis at the same time, and his position was perilous.

The English gained "the Battle of the Spurs" near Guinegate, so called because of the extreme hurry with which the French got away from there without fighting.

The Swiss penetrated as far as Dijon, to which they laid siege. Trémouille, finding it impossible to beat them, bought them. This purchase, however, was made with great difficulty, and the price paid was large, some of it being in cash and some in promises.

Louis XII. promptly sanctioned the bargain, and praised Trémouille highly for the negotiation.

The new Pope, Leo IX., was still the soul of the league against France, and Louis set himself to work to appease the pontiff. This he did by disavowing the Council of Pisa, and making his submission to the acknowledged head of the Church. Ferdinand the Catholic and Maximilian were ready for peace, upon condition of keeping what they had taken from Louis; the English were bought off with a pension of 100,000 crowns per annum to be paid to Henry VIII. for ten years, and by the cession of the city of Tournay. A.D. 1514

It is worthy of mention that when the English were besieging Tournay, in 1514, the Emperor Maximilian served as a volunteer in the English service, and was paid 100 crowns per day.

It is also worth mentioning that Maximilian's daughter Marguerite was the most implacable of all the enemies to France during these years of war and disaster. She was the ruler of the Low Countries, and her influence with her father, the emperor, was always used against France. She hated the French people because of the

humiliation the French king had put upon her in her youth. The Florentine minister, writing of her, said: "She asks for nothing but war against the king of France; she thinks of naught but keeping up and fanning the kindled fire, and she has the game in her hands, for the king of England and the emperor have full confidence in her, and she does with them just as she pleases." In this manner, the fury of a woman scorned dealt France some very deadly blows.

Louis had at length obtained peace, but the price was high. Ferdinand the Catholic, his Holiness the Pope, Maximilian, and Sforza were in quiet possession of all the conquests which French soldiers had died to win; the king of England held Tournay, and was to be paid a yearly pension; the taxes had been increased to meet the expenses of the long wars, new imposts laid, and large portions of the royal domains sold. To this humiliating situation had an ambitious and unscrupulous foreign policy led the king of France.

A.D. 1514 To crown his troubles, Louis, who was now a widower, decided to marry a young wife, the sister of Henry VIII. of England.

The Princess Mary was sixteen years of age, Louis XII. was fifty-three; the marriage took place in October, 1515, and by January, 1516, Louis was a dead man.

A.D. 1515 The French people loved Louis XII. sincerely, and they mourned him greatly. His young widow bore her loss meekly, and married again almost as soon as she could change her clothes after the funeral.

CHAPTER XXI

FRANCIS THE FIRST

"ALL our pains are for nothing; this big boy will spoil everything," Louis XII. used to say when some incident would clearly reveal the extravagant, headstrong, and passionate nature of the next heir to the throne, Francis of Angoulême.

The "Old Régime" dates from the accession of Francis I.; and by that term is meant the old absolute monarchy of France, in which the king's will was law and the king's power without limit. Of his own good pleasure he could make war or peace, levy taxes and spend the money, issue decrees and compel obedience. He was the State, uniting in his person supreme power, executive, judicial, and legislative. A.D. 1515

For political reasons, a marriage had been arranged between Francis and Claude, the daughter of the late king; Brittany was thus kept in unity with France, and the young monarch, who was crowned in 1515, found himself, at the age of twenty, master of a compact, united, and powerful kingdom.

Francis I. was the beau-ideal of a knight-errant, — tall, robust, handsome, brave, polished, and open-handed. In all feats of arms he was expert. In the tournament, in the ball-room, at the festal board, and on the battle-field, he was a brilliant figure. Mentally he was quick and

bright, but fickle and shallow. In principle, he was an absolutist, believing that the king's will was, and ought to be, the supreme law of the land. As to morality, he had none, either public or private.

He commenced his reign by spending all the public moneys he could lay his hands on. Balls and feasts and tournaments followed each other in brilliant succession, no expense being spared to dazzle the multitude by the display of royal splendour. Pearls were showered on loose women; offices and emoluments on looser men; and in frivolous pageantries and personal pleasures were squandered sums sufficient to have opened canals, drained marshes, and educated the illiterate masses.

Having emptied the treasury in riotous living, Francis applied the usual remedy; he increased the taxes.

The vainest of mortals was Francis, and he thirsted for renown. Consequently he broke the universal peace, and went to war. Invading Italy, he was fortunate enough to meet his enemies at Marignano, where his own troops were led by competent soldiers, Trémouille, Trivulzio, Bourbon, and Bayard, and where his enemies had no leaders at all. The result was a decided victory for the French — the young king, of course, getting most of the credit.

He had, in fact, fought with great courage, and had thus brought himself on a parity with the thousands of privates who had done likewise. He received knighthood on the field of battle from the hands of Bayard.

A.D. 1515 The Swiss were the foes Francis had met at Marignano. They relied upon their close array, and their pikes eighteen feet long, and they advanced upon the French artillery with the utmost courage. Thirty times in succession the

French charged them without checking their advance. They seized the first batteries, and it required the most desperate efforts of the king and all his generals to save the day. Night came on, but the fight raged till the moon went down, and it was too dark to tell friend from foe. The contending forces were all intermingled, and so remained till daylight again made it possible to know whom to kill. Between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, the French received a reënforcement of Venetian troops, and the Swiss retired. They did not scatter, they did not flee, they were not demoralized; they simply marched back home, in good order; and the king of France was so glad they were gone that he soon afterwards agreed to pay them 700,000 crowns not to trouble him any more. The treaty made between Francis and the Swiss proved to be permanent. Swiss soldiers fought and died for Louis XVI. when that last king of the old French monarchy did not have the nerve to fight and die for himself.

The victory of Marignano gave a brilliant beginning to the reign of Francis, and was soon followed by a general peace. The victor secured Genoa and the Milanese, and Tournay was redeemed.

Between the French king and the Pope, Leo X., a concordat was concluded (1516) which overthrew the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VII. By the latter the French Church had enjoyed the privilege of electing the heads of ecclesiastical bodies; had been exempt from the *annates*, or first year's revenue, which every appointee to an important benefice was obliged to pay to the Pope; and had stoutly maintained its independence by proclaiming that the decisions of general councils of the Church were superior to papal decrees. A.D. 1516

By the concordat, the Pope secured the *annates*, and a disavowal of the doctrine that the councils could check the papal decrees; the king secured the right of disposing of all Church appointments.

In this compact between Pope and king, absolutism gained an immense advance. The Pope became absolute in the exercise of spiritual power; and the king reduced to subjection, and dependence upon the royal favour, the clergy, who, until that time, had enjoyed the power of self-government under the Pragmatic Sanction.

There was a loud outcry in France against the concordat, and the Parliament refused to register it. For two years there was resistance, but the king's will prevailed.

Henceforth, the guardians of religion were to be chosen by kings, who, in turn, would be influenced by favourites, male and female, in making the choice. It is no wonder, then, that the Church became so rapidly and thoroughly corrupt. Under a system of royal appointment, a harlot might influence the selection of a bishop, and a bishop so chosen might very naturally prove to be a Retz, a Mazarin, a De Rohan, or a Talleyrand.

The Parliament of Paris, composed of lawyers who had only the power of protest, deserved well of France upon very many occasions; and never more so than when for two years it stood out for the liberties of the French Church.

In 1516 Francis I. published an ordinance in which he declared that his royal pastime had been impeded and curtailed by certain lawless persons who had been killing rabbits, partridges, and pheasants. He therefore decreed that the punishments of fines, floggings, banishment, confiscation of property, penal servitude in the galleys, and

death itself, should be inflicted, according to the flagrancy of the crime, upon all those who should thereafter, without license, presume to kill game. To the king, the nobles, and to the proprietors of forest lands, he reserved the exclusive right of sporting upon their property.

The Parliament resisted this decree for twelve months, but when the king threatened to punish the members as rebels, they yielded.

These Game Laws became a source of the most intolerable hardship to the unprivileged masses of the French people, and had much to do with creating the class-hatreds which overturned the monarchy.

Previous to the reign of Francis I. there had been no such thing as a numerous court. The monarchs were attended by their counsellors, their chief officers, and the underlings necessary to their comfort; but no great throng of idlers, parasites, pleasure-seekers, professional flatterers, and office-brokers hung about the king and lived upon the royal bounty.

Previous to his time, the feudal chief had lived in his own castle, maintaining there the state of a local ruler. He sought the court of the king only when summoned there for reasons of State. The king had no grander palace than his, no wider forests, and no more fruitful fields; no train of menials and vassals more loyal and devoted. Hence the noble nursed his pride and took his pleasure in his own dominions.

But a great change had been coming. The policy of the crown had reduced the power of the nobles, while advancing its own. The king was slowly but surely becoming the donor of all good gifts, and his power became the magnet which attracted.

When Francis I. ascended the throne, the time was ripe for innovations, and the young king's disposition lent itself readily to the work.

There was about Francis a certain largeness of nature which dazzled his contemporaries. He loved to have large crowds about him, loved the display and the noise of large assemblies, loved grand houses and parks, loved large expenditures, and specially loved a large harem. Therefore, almost as a matter of course, he drew around him a large number of people. Young men came because they wanted adventures, fame, honours. Old men came because they wanted office or money.

Young women came because the light of so much splendour was fascinating; besides, it was the only place where they could meet the most desirable young men. And the old women came because the country home was lonesome, and the girls needed duennas.

No matter what the motive, the fact is undeniable that Francis soon gathered about him the most beautiful women and the most gallant men that France could furnish. Wherever he moved, there attended him a magnificent train, such as had never been seen before.

Great palaces were erected, great estates acquired and given away, great banquets held, and great tournaments, lasting day after day, and great festivals, great ceremonial displays, and great profusion of every sort. It made the taxpayers groan, but otherwise all went merrily.

Thus the court of the French king was formed. The noble forsook his province to dangle at the heels of his royal master. His castle was deserted for a room in the king's palace, or a mansion in Paris or Blois. His life,

as a proprietor of land, local magistrate, and provincial autocrat, was replaced by the laborious idleness of attending on the king.

The times had already arrived in France when the royal favour was sought by the offering of wife, daughter, or sister as a sacrifice to the majestic lust of "the Lord's anointed."

In the year 1519 Maximilian, emperor of Germany, died. The right to choose his successor was vested in seven princes of the German states. Three candidates announced themselves: Francis I., Charles of Austria, and Henry VIII. of England. A.D. 1519

Charles was the grandson of Mary of Burgundy, was a German by birth, and, being the grandson of the late emperor, stood naturally in the line of succession.

Francis I., however, entered most earnestly into the contest, and went to buying votes with all the zest of a modern patriot.

"I will spend three millions to be elected emperor," said Francis, and into the canvass he plunged. He straightway bribed four of the electors, the archbishops of Cologne and of Trèves, the Count Palatine, and the Margrave of Brandenburg.

When Charles heard of this, he wrote to his agents: "We are determined to spare nothing and to stake all upon it. The election must be secured, whatever it may cost."

Here, then, was a battle of purses between the two candidates. The crown of an empire was to be auctioned off, and the highest bidder would get it.

The agent of Francis wrote him, "All will go well if we can fill the maw of the Margrave of Brandenburg."

Francis answered, "I will have him *gorged* at any price."

Accordingly, the margrave was given his own price, and the purchaser took a receipt for him in due form, which stipulated that the margrave should vote for Francis.

Those people who are fond of saying that human nature is worse now than formerly should read the record of this election with care. The Margrave of Brandenburg, who thus sold out, and gave a bill of sale of himself, was the lineal ancestor of the present emperor of Germany, the marquisate of Brandenburg being the nucleus around which was built the German Empire.

One elector, only, scorned all bribes. This was Frederick, Duke of Saxony. Be his name honoured forever!

Henry VIII. of England had dropped out of the race, but the rumours of all these bargainings for votes rekindled his hopes, and he sent Richard Pace into the market — supplied, presumably, with ducats. Richard soon collapsed. He found the auction so far advanced and the prices so alarming that he abandoned his purpose.

The seven electoral princes met at Frankfort, June 17, 1519, to choose an emperor. Charles had had the foresight to gather an army and station it very near by, well knowing the conservative influence of cold steel, while Francis had trusted entirely to money, and had no troops at hand. Charles was put in nomination before the Diet by the archbishop of Mayence, Francis by the archbishop of Trèves. Rival intrigues were kept up, the troops were a clog to debate, and finally Frederick of Saxony was unanimously elected, as a compromise. He declined the

honour, made a speech in favour of Charles, and Charles was unanimously elected.

Francis I., being an absolute king, was able to indulge the natural impulses of a defeated candidate; he determined to go to war with his successful rival.

Both he and Charles were exceedingly anxious to secure the alliance of Henry VIII. of England.

Francis strove to accomplish his purpose in his usual high-flown, gaudy, and overdone way. He invited Henry to a personal conference, and they accordingly met at A.D. 1520 Guines in France. So lavish was the outlay of money on the occasion, so brilliant the festivities, so rich the raiment of the assembled nobles, so gorgeous the trappings of royalty, so dazzling the display of ornaments, decorations, jewellery, and similar trumpery, that history has named the place of the royal meeting, "The Field of the Cloth of Gold."

But with all his elegant winsomeness, and flattering courtesies, Francis failed to captivate the jealous heart of Henry VIII. The boundless and reckless vanity of the French king led him into two blunders. One was that he and his train eclipsed in splendour Henry and his followers. The next was more serious; he flung Henry to the ground in a wrestling-match, and the courtiers witnessed the feat.

What royal heart could forgive mistakes like these?

Henry embraced Francis most lovingly at parting, A.D. 1520 assured him of his unbounded affection, and went straightway to Gravelines, where he held a quiet conference with Charles; the upshot of which was that Henry entered into an alliance with Charles, instead of Francis.

Charles had been subtle enough to let Henry outshine

him, and had been cunning enough to give large gifts to Cardinal Wolsey, and to promise his support to the cardinal in his ambition to become the next Pope.

Wolsey being thus pleased, it was easy for him to convince Henry, whom at that time he controlled, to abandon Francis and treat with Charles. In doing this, Wolsey was duping both himself and his master; Charles was playing them false.

A.D. 1521 Francis, however, lost no time grieving over his diplomatic failure. He gathered his armies and opened the war. Both in Spain and Italy he assailed his enemy, and in both his troops were routed and driven back.

Francis was on the point of setting out to take command in person, when a new danger threatened him.

The Duke of Bourbon, constable of France, and the most powerful subject, became a traitor, and entered the service of Charles. His crime was great, but so was his provocation.

Charles of Bourbon was the last of the feudal semi-sovereigns. There was no longer a bold Duke of Burgundy ready to take up arms on equal terms with his king. There was no longer a lord of Anjou, Provence, or Brittany, holding revenues and privileges almost as great as those of the monarch himself. The crown had crushed or absorbed them all.

Charles of Bourbon alone could boast of such wealth and such power as made him almost a peer of his king. Throughout his immense possessions he levied taxes and troops, convoked the local assemblies, and appointed the officers of justice.

He was four years older than Francis I., and was also far abler. He was an accomplished knight, a skilful

general, a proud, brave, ambitious, unbending, and honourable man.

In 1509 he distinguished himself at the battle of Agnadello; and at Ravenna, when Gaston de Foix fell, the troops clamoured for Bourbon as his successor.

There was a sternness about the duke, a haughtiness and proud independence, which prevented him from being a favourite with kings. Louis XII. had said of him: "I wish he was more gay, less taciturn; still water affrights me."

At the "Field of the Cloth of Gold," Henry VIII had remarked the proud bearing and splendid train of Bourbon, and had said to Francis, "If I had a subject like that I would not leave his head very long on his shoulders."

It does not appear that Francis himself distrusted his powerful subject or disliked him. On the contrary it seems to be the fact that the two men had the utmost good feeling for each other. Francis had made Bourbon the constable of the kingdom, at the very beginning of the reign, and Bourbon had served with splendid ability and loyalty in the Italian wars. To a very large amount he had advanced his own money to pay the troops in the king's service at a time when the king himself was unable to furnish the funds.

That the trouble between the king and Bourbon was caused by a woman seems to be certain.

Anne of France, who had ruled the kingdom during the minority of Charles VIII., was still in life. By Peter II. of Bourbon she had one daughter, and this daughter, Suzanne, was the heiress of the elder branch of the house of Bourbon.

Charles of Bourbon, the head of the younger branch, married Suzanne, and thus united the two branches of the family. By the marriage settlement, in which Louis XII. had taken great interest, all the possessions of both were to become the property of the survivor.

In 1517 a son was born of this marriage. The delighted father, determined to make the child's baptism a grand event, invited his king to become the godfather, and Anne of France the godmother.

Francis I., accompanied by his mother, Louise of Savoy, and a splendid train of noble lords and ladies, repaired to Moulins, where the Duke of Bourbon had a magnificent palace and where he lived in regal splendour.

The wealth displayed by the duke on this occasion astonished the king, and perhaps displeased him. Five hundred gentlemen, clad in velvet and wearing gold chains, constantly attended the duke. The queen-mother could not hide her jealousy, and Francis was led to say that even the king of France would find it difficult to make so great a show as Bourbon was then doing.

The king was governed by two persons, his mother and the Chancellor Duprat. Both were able, adroit, vindictive, and unscrupulous. Bourbon had the misfortune to incur the enmity of Duprat, also, at this time, by answering some overtures of the wily estate-seeker by a stern and contemptuous reply.

In 1521, when Francis needed four armies to meet his foes, he summoned Bourbon to Picardy, where the duke promptly appeared with six thousand troops raised in his own possessions. The king not only passed over Bourbon, still constable of France, in appointing commanders for the three large armies already in the field, but in this

army of Picardy itself gave to his brother-in-law, Alençon, the command of the advance-guard, which belonged to Bourbon by virtue of his office.

This public affront, put upon a high-spirited man, wounded him profoundly, but, nevertheless, he served valiantly in the campaign, and captured the town of Hesdin by a surprise.

In 1521 his wife, Suzanne, died, having confirmed by will the settlement of all her possessions upon her husband as stipulated in the marriage contract — her son being already dead.

The duke was thus left a childless widower.

The queen-mother was the next of kin to the late Duchess of Bourbon, Suzanne, and her heir-at-law. Between her legal right and the vast properties which Suzanne had possessed there was nothing but the marriage settlement, confirmed by the will.

The Chancellor Duprat advised the queen-mother that the marriage settlement and the will could be set aside; and the great lawsuit commenced.

The king himself joined his mother in the litigation, and Bourbon suddenly found himself on the brink of ruin.

Sued by the king and his mother, at the suggestion of the chancellor, before the Parliament which had been reduced to humble submission by the king, his hopes of winning the case could not have been high, even at the beginning.

Judgment was given against Bourbon, and he was stripped of all the immense wealth which had come to him through his wife.

The duke would have been far advanced upon the road

to perfect holiness if he had not felt profoundly resentful of this high-handed outrage. In the eyes of all Europe it appeared to be a scandalous robbery.

Rumour even had it that Louise of Savoy hated Bourbon because he had refused an offer of her hand in marriage, saying, "I will never consent to marry a woman devoid of modesty."

Louise was notoriously devoid of modesty, and of some other things, and the reply kindled her intense resentment.

Whether this story be true or not, the spoliation of Bourbon was accompanied by every circumstance which could madden him, for Francis had long since stopped his pay as constable, and had never repaid the advances made by the duke to the royal troops in Italy.

Is it a marvel that a proud feudal chief like Bourbon wanted revenge? Is it so unnatural that he found it impossible to serve longer a master so ungrateful, jealous, and unprincipled as Francis I.?

At any rate the duke determined to quit the service of the French king, and to enter that of Charles V. To this step he was strongly advised by his mother-in-law, Anne of France. In her eyes the house of Bourbon was quite the peer of the house of Valois, and had quite as much right to contract alliances with foreign princes and states.

"I do beg to command you," said this venerable daughter of the great king, Louis XI., "to accept the emperor's alliance. Promise me to do so, and I will die more easy."

She died November 14, 1522, leaving all her possessions to the duke.

Not long afterwards, terms were arranged between him and the emperor. Henry VIII. of England was a party

to the treaty, and Charles V. endeavoured to secure Bourbon's promise to acknowledge Henry as the king of France. To this the duke stubbornly refused to agree. He was ready to attack an ungrateful king who had wronged him beyond endurance, but further he would not go.

Francis was informed of the pending negotiations between the emperor and the duke, and they filled him with alarm. He made earnest efforts to conciliate Bourbon, offering to pay the moneys due him, and to restore the states of which he had been plundered.

"It is too late," answered the duke, and he went his way into what historians call treason.

Historians are human — very. Louis XII., while Duke of Orleans, had levied war against the king of France, time and again — yet how tender the historians are with Louis XII.! The "Great Condé," in a later reign, joined the enemies of the French king, and led Spanish troops against French; but the historians deal gently with the traitor and almost forget his crime. Why then is Bourbon's treason so odious? Compared to his provocation, those of Louis and of Condé were puerile. Bourbon was the traitor who, in after years, as we shall presently see, took charge of a band of German Lutherans, which swooped down upon Italy, made havoc of the Pope's wealth, stormed the holy city of Rome, took it and sacked it, rioted in it for nine months, and made the Holy Father a prisoner in the Castle of St. Angelo.

We suspect that herein lies the peculiar sinfulness of the treason of Bourbon to the orthodox historians who have had charge of the history of France.

The defection of Bourbon was a serious blow to Francis; and, for a while, the kingdom was in great peril.

A.D. 1523 The Spaniards invaded from the south, the Germans from the east, and an army of English and Flemings penetrated to within eleven leagues of Paris.

Each of these invading forces was met by the king's lieutenants, and driven back.

In Italy, however, disaster followed disaster. Bonnivet, the French commander, was forced by Bourbon to retreat.

A.D. 1524 Bayard, conducting the rear guard, was killed by an arrow shot from an arquebuse. A nobler warrior never wore a plume. He was gentle, he was pure, he was fearless. By his wonderfully ingenious defence of Mezières in 1521 he had saved France from invasion, at a time when there was no army to resist the invader.

He it was whose knightly soul and bearing had made so strong an impression even upon the shallow nature of Francis I., that he had insisted upon receiving knighthood at the hands of Bayard on the victorious field of Marignano.

As he now lay dying, his friends who dared to remain were joined by the pursuing enemy; but there was a hush over all when it was known that it was Bayard — "Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach" — who lay breathing his last.

The Duke of Bourbon came to him and expressed his pity.

"Have no pity for me," said Bayard, "I die having done my duty; but I have pity for you, to see you serving against your king, your country, and your oath."

The Marquis of Pescara was Bourbon's associate in command of the Spanish army. He came up, condoled with the stricken hero in the most touching words, and ordered the Spaniards to put up a tent over Bayard's

head, and to forbid any noise near him, so that he might die in peace.

The Spanish army followed up its successes, and invaded France, under the lead of Bourbon and Pescara. For forty days Marseilles was besieged, but the Spaniards retired before the relieving forces brought up by Francis.

The French pursued the retreating Spaniards, entered Italy, retook Milan, invaded Naples, and besieged Pavia.

Bourbon, Pescara, and Lannoy gathered together troops from all quarters, advanced upon the French army at Pavia, totally defeated it in a pitched battle, and the French king was taken prisoner. A.D. 1525

Francis wrote his mother an account of his defeat, and in the letter occurred the sentence, "There is nothing left to me but honour and my life — which is safe." Hero-worshippers have condensed, remodelled, and improved the letter so as to make it read, "All's lost but honour."

To Charles V. the captive hero wrote a plaintive appeal, far from heroic; but Charles was quite unsentimental, and Francis, not being admitted to ransom, was carried to Madrid, and for about a year was held in captivity.

Great was the dismay throughout France when it was known that the French army had been destroyed at Pavia, and the king taken prisoner. Prayers were offered in the churches, city gates were closed, and chains stretched across the Seine.

The firmness and dexterity of two women, the king's mother and his sister, guided the government safely through the crisis.

The clergy and the Parliament loudly proclaimed their

belief that the misfortunes which had fallen upon the kingdom were due to the toleration with which the Lutherans had been treated, and to the financial abuses of which the government had been guilty. Reforms upon these two subjects were demanded. Vehement requests were made that there should be a vigorous torturing and burning of heretics. The regent, Louise of Savoy, the king's mother, resisted the demand for financial reform, but granted the prayer against the Lutherans.

She caused Jacques Pavanes, a learned man whose religion was his only crime, to be burnt to death in Paris. Another Lutheran, known as the Hermit of Livry, underwent a similar punishment, in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame, the bell tolling throughout the horrible tragedy in order that a large crowd might be drawn there to witness the spectacle, and be intimidated thereby from favourable consideration of Lutheran doctrines.

These atrocities had a reassuring influence upon the dissatisfied Catholics, and they rallied loyally to the regent's support,—not pressing the demand for lower taxes and honester expenditures.

To her eternal credit be it remembered, Marguerite, the king's sister, was bitterly opposed to the persecution of the Reformers, and more than one of them owed life and liberty to her protection.

By his victory at Pavia, the German emperor had now become so powerful that his allies grew jealous of him. Henry VIII. and Wolsey, being handsomely bribed by the artful regent, detached England from the alliance with Charles V., and made a treaty with France. The Pope likewise cooled toward the too-powerful Charles, whose troops showed growing fondness for gold and

silver church-properties, and France gained a friend in that influential quarter.

The regent also encouraged the Turks to attack Charles' Austrian dominions, and opened negotiations with the Venetians. While strengthening France in this manner by her wise foreign policy, the regent paid off the arrears due the survivors of the army, ransomed the prisoners, organized a new army, and repressed internal disturbances.

In fact this woman — corrupt, cruel, and immoral as she certainly was — proved herself a far abler ruler than Francis himself.

Much of the strength of the administration emanated from the chancellor, Duprat, whose advice guided the regent in all affairs of State.

Meanwhile Francis I. was fuming and fretting in confinement. Charles wished to extort harsh terms, and Francis resisted. In substance, Charles demanded that the dominions of which Louis XI. had despoiled his grandmother, Mary of Burgundy, should be restored to him, her rightful heir. Francis swore he would die in captivity before he would dishonour himself by the restitution.

Other conditions precedent to granting Francis his liberty were also demanded. Charles asked that the property of which the king's mother had plundered the Duke of Bourbon should be restored to him; also that the Prince of Orange should be reinstated in the dominions of which Francis had deprived him; also that a heavy ransom should be paid; also that Francis should marry Eleanor, Charles' widowed sister.

Marguerite, the king's devoted sister, visited him,

nursed him in his sickness, pleaded for him with Charles, and secured better treatment for the captive; but Charles held to his demands.

A.D. 1526 Francis, having sworn he "would ne'er consent, consented," signed the treaty, made solemn oath to observe it, and secretly filed with his negotiators an equally solemn oath not to observe it.

He was then escorted to the French frontier, exchanged for his two sons, who were to be held as hostages, and landed on French soil. Mounting a splendid horse there ready, he cried exultantly, "Once more I am a king," galloped away without a moment's delay, and reached Bayonne, where his mother and sister awaited him. The courtiers and the people welcomed him with the wildest joy, and for an entire year the liberated monarch lingered in the southern provinces, recuperating his health by unbridled indulgence in every species of dissipation.

In the Treaty of Madrid the unprincipled character of Francis is strikingly illustrated; he callously left his allies to their fate, while Charles, as has been seen, protected his own.

Never for one moment, however, had Francis meant to observe the treaty. The very first business he attended to on his return to France was the formal repudiation of the contract by which he had obtained his freedom.

Charles V. was furiously enraged against his late prisoner, denounced him as a liar and a scoundrel, and clamorously demanded that Francis should abide the treaty or come back to jail. Francis had no intention of doing either; but his high chivalric sense of honour demanded that he should take some notice of Charles' denunciation, and he therefore challenged the emperor to mortal combat.

To the utter disgust of Francis, Charles accepted the challenge and named the time and place for the fight, whereupon Francis dropped the subject; nor did he ever afterwards risk his royal person in battle of any sort.

An assembly of the notables, convoked by the king for the purpose, formally declared that Francis had no authority to cede French territory, and that therefore the Treaty of Madrid was void.

Later in this year, 1526, the Holy League for the deliverance of Italy from the Spaniards was formed by Pope Clement VII., the king of France, the Swiss, the Venetians, the Florentines, and Henry VIII. of England.

The Duke of Bourbon was put at the head of the emperor's troops, and he fell upon Italy with an army more terrible to papal subjects than Goths or Vandals had ever been, — for these soldiers of Bourbon were Lutherans of the most lawless, savage, and fanatical type.

The manner in which this army had been originally raised affords the highest evidence of the great ability of the Duke of Bourbon, and of his mastery over the will of others.

Finding his position in Italy precarious, in 1524, and that the Spanish commanders were jealous of him, he abruptly abandoned the imperial forces; and going to Turin, he made a personal appeal to the Duke and Duchess of Savoy for aid in raising an army of his own. So completely did he win them over, that they put him in possession of all their financial resources, — money and jewels. Thus equipped, he passed into Germany to recruit soldiers there. In a short time he had an army of his own, troops who would have followed him against either Francis or Charles, and who were especially eager

to follow him against the Pope. These soldiers he led back into Italy, his second in command being George of Freundsberg, an old captain of the emperor's guard, who, being present three years before when Luther appeared before the Diet at Worms, had slapped the bold monk on the shoulder, and said, "Little monk, this is a daring step thou art going to take! Neither I, nor any other captain of us, ever did the like. If thy cause is good, and if thou have faith in thy cause, forward, little monk, forward, in God's name!"

We have already seen how Bourbon, at the head of these Lutherans whom he had enlisted in Germany, met Francis at Pavia and wreaked upon him such vengeance as one proud man rarely inflicts upon another.

The bitterest pang in all that humiliation to Francis was that Bourbon had stricken him down.

On January 30, 1527, the duke put himself at the head of his army and moved upon Milan. He took it, held it to ransom, and advanced upon Rome, his lawless bands plundering the country as they went.

On March 5, 1527, he arrived before Rome, pitched his camp, and ordered the assault for the morrow. Addressing his troops, he said: —

"The great chances of our destiny have brought us here. Now is the time to show courage and valour. You have marched over bad roads, in midwinter, amid rain and mud, snow and frost, hunger and thirst, and armed foes. You are penniless; but if you are victorious in this attack you will be rich. If you fail, you are ruined.

"Yonder is the city where in times past a wise astrologer prophesied that I should die; but I swear to you I care

little for dying there, if when I die my name be left with endless renown throughout the world."

On the morning Bourbon, clad all in white, led his troops to the attack. As that gallant figure moves in front, inspiring every faint heart in his own ranks, and drawing upon himself the deadliest fire of the enemy, one cannot help but think of another superb soldier, Skobeleff, who in our day electrified the world by his brief brilliant career, and who, arrayed in spotless white, led the Russians to such marvellous deeds of daring by the simple words, "Get up, children, and follow me."

Bourbon marched in front close up to the wall, put the scaling-ladder to it, and was mounting to the assault. As his foot touched the third rung of the ladder, he was shot down.

Never did his unbending nature show itself more heroically than at this supreme moment when his life was going out. He ordered his cloak thrown over him so that his troops might not know who had fallen, and he died thus, while his triumphant and devoted troops were pouring over the walls.

When the soldiers heard of his death, which they did very soon, their fury was redoubled. The streets of the Eternal City rang with the fearful cry of "Slay, slay! Blood, blood! Bourbon, Bourbon!"

With no strong hand to curb it, the lust of vindictive passion, of greed, and of carnage, raged in Rome fiercely and without restraint. Every horror known to war was felt by the miserable inhabitants. A.D. 1527

During nine months they were at the mercy of a brutal soldiery, who felt justified in retaliating upon them every outrage Catholics had inflicted upon Lutherans.

The Pope himself was a prisoner, shut up in the castle of St. Angelo.

In the memoirs of that wonderful artist and consummate knave, Benvenuto Cellini, we are told that he fired the shot which ended the tragic career of the greatest of the Bourbons. The statement may be true.

Another account is that the sentinel fired the shot, as he was running away from his post.

Still another story is that a priest was the slayer.

Whoever he was, the marksman interfered with some interesting history, for there is no doubt whatever that Bourbon intended to carve out for himself an Italian kingdom. He was the idol of the troops, a born leader, organizer, and fighter; he was the ablest general of his time, and had he lived, history would have been differently written.

The situation of the Pope was pitiable in the extreme. His alliance with Francis I. had ruined him, ruined Rome, almost ruined Italy.

And where was Francis? What was he doing all this while? Why was there no spur on *his* heel, no helmet on *his* head, no army dashing after *his* white plume as he sped onwards to Rome crying, "Rescue!"

Francis let his ally fall, and stirred no finger to help him. The king feasted and hunted, caroused and jousted, sported with men and sported with women. Shamefully sunk in debauchery, he let Charles V., without hindrance, punish to his heart's content the Pope, whose only offence was that he had become the ally of Francis.

A.D. 1528 In 1528 Francis sent another army into Italy to reconquer Naples. After some successes it melted away from disease and the want of supplies. Another army was sent, and met a similar fate.

Charles V., however, could make no headway against the French because Francis had made a secret treaty with the Turks, and induced them to assail the emperor on the Austrian frontier.

These various wars had brought such extreme misery upon the people, and the resources of the king and the emperor were so nearly exhausted that negotiations for a general peace began. Two women represented the two monarchs and put an end to the war by the Treaty of Cambray (1529). It was called "The Ladies' Peace," A.D. Francis having been represented by his mother, Louise of 1529 Savoy, and Charles by his aunt, Marguerite of Austria, the once-intended bride of Charles VIII.

The peace they concluded forced Francis to abide by the Treaty of Madrid, with the exception that he was released from his obligation to surrender Burgundy.

With his usual perfidy Francis left his allies in the lurch, and Venice was sacrificed.

Francis paid his 2,000,000 golden crowns with the help of England and thereby ransomed his sons. He took to wife Charles' sister Eleanor, as the Treaty of Madrid bound him to do, and gave up Naples which had cost so much blood and treasure.

Although this Treaty of Cambray was a disgrace to the king and a humiliation to his country, he celebrated it by carousals and magnificent displays, which lasted six months.

CHAPTER XXII

FRANCIS THE FIRST (*continued*)

DURING the years which followed the Treaty of Cambray Charles V. turned his arms against the Turks. With a large fleet he attacked Tunis, a nest of pirates. A.D. 1535 It was captured, and 20,000 Christians whom the pirates had held in captivity were liberated.

As to Francis I. he followed the round of his pleasures, allowing his mother and his chancellor to rule the State and pillage its treasury. When Louise of Savoy died (1531) the enormous sum of 1,500,000 golden crowns was found in her coffers, the fruits of her unrighteous greed. Duprat, the chancellor, being a cardinal, had boundless opportunities of enriching himself. He seized upon the richest benefices, and thus rifled the Church with one hand while he plundered the State with the other.

It is related of him that he cherished the ambition to become Pope, and spoke to Francis about it. The king refused his support, saying, "Such an election would cost too much; the appetite of the cardinals is unsatiable."

"Sir," answered Duprat, "France would not have to bear the expense, I will provide for it; there are 400,000 crowns ready for that purpose."

"Where did you get all that money?" asked the king dryly, and walked away. On the morrow he seized to

his own uses a very considerable portion of the chancellor's cash.

Duprat grumbled, deeply afflicted.

"What does he complain of?" asked the king. "I have only done to him what he has so often advised me to do to others."

When the chancellor was on his death-bed, Francis sent De Bryan to seize upon all his property. In one of the chancellor's houses they found 800,000 crowns, in another 300,000, besides gold and silver plate. The king took the money and appropriated it to his own use.

During the continuation of the "Ladies' Peace," Francis gave considerable attention to the erection and embellishment of magnificent palaces, inviting Italian artists into France, employing them, and rewarding them liberally. Some of the noblest architecture in France dates from this era, which is called that of the Renaissance.

It became the fashion to patronize scholars, authors, men of letters, painters, sculptors, and architects. Francis followed the fashion and posed ostentatiously as the friend of culture and the patron of learned men.

At this period also a national infantry was organized, and Brittany, which Francis had governed as duke, was united to the crown by a vote of the Bretons themselves (1532). Foreign alliances were contracted, alliances most inconsistent and hurtful. The Catholic King of France entered into treaties with the Turks and with the Protestant princes of Germany, with Henry VIII. of England, and with James V., the king of Scotland. A.D. 1532

The most fatal of all the unwise steps of Francis, how-

ever, was the marriage of his son Henry to the Pope's niece, Catherine de' Medici, the abominable woman who was so long a curse to the kingdom.

The alliance which Francis had concluded with the infidels and the Lutherans gave great scandal to the Catholics of Europe, and the orthodoxy of the king began to seem doubtful. His sister Marguerite was believed to lean to the Reformed religion, and one of his concubines was said to be of the same faith. Francis felt that he must do something to prevent the spread of these doubts about his orthodoxy. He therefore began a religious persecution, attended in person the public burning of heretics, actively took part in the hideous ceremony, and loudly declared that he would help burn his own son if he should become untrue to the Catholic faith.

Between November 10, 1534, and May 3, 1535, twenty-four Lutherans were burnt to death in Paris alone. Their crime was that their belief upon the subject of religion differed from that of the king and the Pope. The wretched victims were suspended by iron chains to beams which were lowered into the fire and then hoisted time after time, so that the agonies of this horrible death should be prolonged to the utmost possible limit.

John Leclerc, a wool-carder of Meaux, posted upon the cathedral door a placard in which the Pope was described as Anti-Christ. For this offence the Parliament of Paris condemned him to be publicly whipped three days consecutively. The sentence was carried out, and he was branded upon the head by the hangman. His mother was present and loudly applauded the punishment. Banished from Meaux, Leclerc went to Metz. There, on the day of a Catholic procession, he broke the images at

whose feet incense was to have been burnt by the worshippers. This so enraged the authorities that he was sentenced to a horrible death. His right hand was cut off, his nose torn off, his nipples plucked out of his breast, his head confined in two bands of red-hot iron; and, while the indomitable man was chanting the Fifty-sixth Psalm, in contempt of the idols he had broken, his maimed and bleeding body was thrown into the fire, and his brave heart reduced to ashes.

Peter Leclerc, a younger brother to John, had remained at Meaux. He was likewise a weaver; and he was chosen by the weavers of Meaux to become the expounder of the Scriptures to them. Thus he became the first minister of the gospel in France. A little congregation gathered about this humble weaver, and for twenty years he preached the doctrines of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Proselytes from the neighbouring villages had joined his meetings until his flock numbered several hundred. One day they were celebrating the Lord's Supper (September 8, 1546) when the house was surrounded by the Catholics, and nearly sixty persons of the congregation were arrested, — men, women, and children. The Parliament of Paris condemned fourteen of them to be burnt to death, on the spot nearest their meeting-house; and the wives of the condemned men were commanded to be present at the execution.

The awful sentence was strictly enforced.

Louis de Berquin was a man of learning, of high character, and considerable property. He had made a study of the question of religion; and, while not a Lutheran, he was not satisfied with the creed and the practice of the Catholic Church. The great Erasmus was his friend,

and so was Marguerite, the sister of the king. He did not defy the Church; on the other hand, he observed its ordinances, rites, and ceremonies. Nevertheless he was denounced as a heretic, was condemned by the Parliament of Paris, and after two attempts of Marguerite to save him, he was burnt at the stake in Paris April 22, 1529, meeting his dreadful doom with perfect heroism.

Throughout France religious fanaticism and clerical hate lit the fires of persecution. Hundreds of innocent men, women, and children lost their lives, thousands languished in foul dungeons, other thousands were tortured, branded, publicly flogged; and other thousands fled the country to escape the danger.

The eulogists of Francis I. have claimed for him that he encouraged learning and protected scholars. In fact, more than one scholar who had come to France at his invitation was given over to the malice of religious persecution; and, in 1534, this royal friend to learning issued a decree abolishing printing, "that means of propagating heresies." No book was to be printed "on pain of the halter."

Six weeks later, however, even Francis became ashamed of his decree, and suspended it.

At the very moment when the French monarch was persecuting to the death every Reformer in France and was enacting a death penalty against any one who should print a book, he was exerting himself to win over the Protestants in Germany with the cry of conciliation and harmony.

We have already seen how Charles VIII., on his way to Italy, hanged a Vaudois by way of prelude. The Vaudois, sometimes called Waldensians, lived in the

Piedmontese valleys of the Alps. They were a simple, honest, pastoral people, leading industrious lives, harming nobody, and paying their taxes with regularity. They paid tithes to the Catholic Church, but recognized no authority save that of the Scriptures. In a luckless hour for these virtuous people, they listened to the Reformers of Germany and Switzerland, who reproached them for their concealment of their faith and worship. For several centuries their religious creed had been pretty well known; but, as they paid all accustomed dues and committed no overt act against the Church, they had not been molested. They had been happy in the peaceful seclusion of their beautiful valleys.

As soon as they formally separated from the Catholic Church, however, persecution began.

The king commissioned William du Bellay, a Catholic, to examine into the facts, and report. After investigation, Du Bellay reported that the Vaudois were honest, laborious, and charitable farmers, discharging all the duties of civil life; but he acknowledged that they did not obey the Catholic Church, did not pray in Latin, as good Catholics should, but prayed in their own vulgar tongue, and that they claimed the right to choose their own pastor.

Francis issued a decree pardoning the Vaudois for the crimes above specified, upon condition that within three months they would "abjure their errors."

The Vaudois humbly requested that these errors be specifically named, but, strange to say, none of the persecutors could do this; they could only repeat the threat and condition, "Abjure! abjure!"

The Vaudois refused to renounce their faith, and, after

some delays, due to political reasons, Francis I. launched upon them the full force of his royal wrath.

An army rushed upon the helpless farmers of the valleys, their homes were burned, their fields ravaged, their families massacred, and their mountain streams reddened with the blood of defenceless thousands. Twenty-two villages were sacked, 763 dwellings given to the flames, 3000 persons murdered, 600 or 700 sent to the galleys, many children sold into slavery.

The fruitful valleys of this unoffending people were made a scorched and blackened desert — a terrible monument to priestly hate and royal heartlessness.

In 1536 Francis made another attempt to secure the Milanese. The reigning duke, Francesco Sforza, had died without heir, Charles V. was busy with the Turks, and Francis evidently believed that the opportunity was too good to be neglected. He seized Piedmont and Savoy, but Charles, returning victorious from the Tunis expe-
A.D. 1536 dition, invaded France. The Constable Montmorency checked the Spaniards by laying waste to the country, and thus making it impossible for the invaders to get supplies. Francis, in the meantime, had made no headway in Italy, and both he and Charles were ready to listen favourably when the Pope interposed and advised
A.D. 1538 peace. The Peace of Nice was signed in 1538, by which Francis kept Savoy and Piedmont.

The two royal enemies now became friends, and showered courtesies and expressions of good will upon each other. Charles, desiring a short cut to the Netherlands, where he had some rebellious taxpayers to deal with,
A.D. 1539 asked permission to travel through France from Spain. The French king not only granted the favour, but made

the journey a brilliant ovation to the emperor, from one end of the kingdom to the other.

After the emperor had put down the insurrection in the Low Countries, Francis insisted that he should surrender Milan to France as he had promised during the journey so recently made.

Charles, however, denied the promise, refused to give up Milan to France, and once more hostilities commenced.

This time Francis, the heretic-burner, acted openly with Solyman, the Turkish sultan. Nice was captured by a Turkish and French squadron — this being the first time, in Europe, that infidels and Christians had combined to fight other Christians. A.D. 1543

Charles aroused much feeling in Europe against the unnatural alliance of Francis and Solyman. He made peace with the German Protestants, renewed his alliance with Henry VIII., and France was again invaded.

Charles advanced within twenty-four leagues of Paris, took St. Dizier, and pushed his outposts forward to Meaux. The consternation of the Parisians was extreme. The richest of them fled to Rouen and Orléans for safety, carrying their valuables with them. The roads were crowded with vehicles filled with fugitives, while bands of robbers seized the opportunity and plundered the helpless. A.D. 1544

In the midst of this panic, in which Francis began to fear that once more he would become Charles' prisoner, news came that Boulogne had been taken by Henry VIII., and that the English were marching on Paris.

Francis at once decided to accept the terms of peace which Charles had already offered him, and this ended the fourth and last war between the rival monarchs.

Francis had nothing to show for twenty years of war, waste, and bloodshed but the petty provinces of Piedmont and Savoy. Everything else they had contended for, Naples, the Milanese, Flanders, Charolais, Artois, were left in the hands of Charles.

The condition of the French nation was pitiable. Many of the nobles were impoverished, trade was stagnant, production paralyzed, suffering universal. The people had been plundered by friend and foe; their houses burnt, their fields laid waste, their wives and daughters subjected to insult and to outrage. The provinces of Champagne and Picardy had been ruined, and their cities almost abandoned. As a crowning humiliation the English were in possession of Boulogne; and before he could regain it, Francis had to pay Henry 2,000,000 golden crowns.

The French king was only fifty-two years of age, but his body was worn out with excesses, and his mind was gloomy with disappointment; he had failed in everything; he had beggared his subjects, and thrown away their lives with reckless profusion in his selfish, senseless wars. He had kindled the flames of religious fanaticism, had sowed the seeds of bloody discords, and had drained France of her vital energies with the mad heedlessness of a privileged and resistless libertine.

He had lowered the standard of honour by his perfidies in affairs of the State; the standard of morals by his shameless life in a court in which he almost made virtue impossible. He had neglected and ill-treated two faithful wives, abandoned his best friends when it suited him to desert them, had allowed loose women to rob the national treasury and starve the needy soldiers, had despoiled the

French Church of its independence and given it back to the abominations of court intrigue, and had crushed the spirit of a generous and loyal people by as frivolous, depraved, extravagant, and callous an absolutism as ever disgraced the name of government.

He died of a shameful disease, but his loathsome body was given a most magnificent burial, and renowned artists were kept employed for years building and decorating his tomb.

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Every man is, to a great extent, the product of his times and the creature of his environment. We should not judge Francis too harshly. He should be measured by the standards which then prevailed; he should be compared with rulers who were his contemporaries, and men who were his associates. If he was no worse than those around him, he should not be singled out for blame. If he left the world no worse than he found it, he should not be lifted to any special eminence of infamy.

But even allowing all these qualifications, Francis should be pilloried into a lofty place among worthless, harmful, and depraved monarchs.

He left the social atmosphere more corrupt than he found it; he was more lustful than a sultan, and not so decent; his resplendent and disreputable court was maintained at the expense of the taxpayers; his mother ruled him by ministering to his evil passions, and her maids of honour, chosen because of their beauty and their compliant dispositions, were known even in that day as "The Light Brigade."

Honesty could not flourish under such a king. The ruler set the example of unscrupulous prodigality, and

others followed. The queen-mother rifled the public coffers to indulge her extravagant tastes. Armies melted away because the moneys voted to them had been squandered by court favourites. Soldiers, serving under the flag of France, perished for want of food and clothing, while harlots feasted and fattened upon the public treasury.

"What excuse can you give for losing me Italy?" demanded Francis, furiously, of the Marshal Lautrec, who had lost in a few days all that had been won by the battle of Marignano.

Lautrec replied, "The troops I commanded, not having been paid, refused to follow me, and I was left alone."

"What!" said the king; "I sent you 400,000 crowns to Genoa, and Semblancy, superintendent of finances, sent you 300,000."

Lautrec replied, "Sire, I received nothing."

Semblancy was summoned, and he said that he had delivered the money to the queen-mother.

The king immediately sought his mother. She denied having received the money. Semblancy confronted her and persisted in his statement. She then confessed getting the money, but claimed that the treasury was in her debt, and that she had properly appropriated the fund to the payment of the debt due to herself.

A.D. 1527 The mother escaped with a reprimand; the minister was hanged.

Francis found the taxes light; he left them heavy. He found the court composed of those who held office and performed duties of State. When he died the court was an immense gathering of the idle, the adventurous, the profligate, and the depraved, who swarmed about the throne and feasted upon the public treasury.

He found the Church enjoying local self-government; he left it a dependant upon Pope and king.

He found a system of government in which the people could be heard through Parliaments and States General. He cowed the Parliament and made it a mere instrument of his will; the States General he did not assemble at all. Taxes were imposed and increased at his good pleasure, and when there was revolt there was cruel suppression of it by the military. The king's will was superior to law.

To this point had the encroachment of the royal authority been brought, not by any force of character possessed by Francis, but through the subtle policy of a crafty priest, Anthony Duprat, who used the natural bias of the king's selfish and aspiring nature to weld the Church and the State into a union which should foster the few in both Church and State at the expense of the many.

The worst blot, however, upon the character of Francis is that he encouraged religious persecution.

Other kings have been as licentious, selfish, shallow, and ruinous to their subjects in dragging innocent husbands, sons, and fathers into cruel wars to gratify a king's caprice; but Francis left to his country the legacy of religious hate — the most deadly and ravenous and insatiable of all hatreds.

Had he taken the position which Charles V. took at first, and which Henry IV. took a short time afterwards, and manfully said to the priests that they should not torture and burn those men and women who claimed the right to worship God according to their consciences, the bloody records of St. Bartholomew would not have stained the history of France.

Prior to the reign of Francis, there had been no such

thing as a public debt. In 1522 he borrowed 200,000 livres, worth by our present standard one million dollars, at eight and a half per cent, and thus originated the public debt of France.

A.D. 1547 It was at Rambouillet, on March 31, 1547, that Francis I. died. Beside that bed of death there was a sinister group. Henry, soon to be king, was weeping bitterly. Catherine de' Medici, seated on a low stool, had her face buried in her hands. These two were bent with grief, but there were others present who were not mourners.

There was Diana—the dying king's mistress—she who purchased from a base king the life of a condemned father by sacrificing her honour; Diana was not bent with grief. And there was also present the Count of Aumale, favourite of young Henry. This favourite expected great things for himself when Henry should have become king, therefore he walked impatiently back and forth, from Henry's room to the king's, and every time he looked upon the dying Francis, he muttered, "The lady-killer is going."

Under this sinister and contemptuous epitaph we leave the glittering, fickle, shallow, and sensual monarch to rest.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE REFORMATION

CREDULITY is a monarch upon whose kingdom the sun never sets. The cradle and the grave are its frontiers, the entire human race its subjects.

The mind of man has not as yet been able to invent any theory, creed, or religion, which, being earnestly proclaimed, is met with unconditional and unanimous rejection. The more complete the absence of proof, the more fervent the voice of faith. In a matter involving a bushel of corn or an acre of land, no person surrenders his liberty of judgment. Upon a question involving the soul's salvation for all eternity, the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve accept the creed in which they happen to be born, and give to the most vital of all subjects less examination than they would give to the age of a horse they are about to buy. Tremendous propositions in theology are accepted without question, because they are the hereditary beliefs in the family. We take our religion as we take the family lands, tenements, and hereditaments; they belonged to our father, and we are the next of kin.

Most of us are Christians because our fathers before us were Christians. Upon the same reasoning your born Turk is always a Mohammedan, and your born Buddhist devoutly believes in Gautama.

This thought is enough to shame us into active research

and independent judgment, but it does not do so. We pity the Turk, and wonder why *he* accepts without investigation everything his priests tell him.

The Christian churches, at first, had been modelled strictly after the teachings of Christ. They were simple, earnest, consecrated, unselfish. Their ceremonial was of the most primitive character. There was no pomp, no parade, no elaborate ritual. There was equality and community of goods among all the congregations.

With tremendous energy and courage the pioneers of the new faith carried it to all parts of the earth. Almost before the wood of the cross had rotted into dust, the loyal apostles had obeyed the command, "Go ye into all the world!" They had toiled across deserts, braved stormy seas, scaled mountain summits, and found pathways through the trackless wilderness to barbarous lands. They despised riches, ease, sloth, and levity; they courted the stern duties of life, welcomed hardships, scorned danger, and revelled in toil and sacrifice.

All forms of paganism they hated, and upon idolatry they waged relentless war. No beauty, no learning, no worth of character, could save the victim where Christian fanaticism encountered and overthrew pagan worshippers. Heathen libraries, rich with the garnered intellectual treasures of a thousand years, were burnt as so much ungodly rubbish. Heathen sculptures, paintings, palaces, and temples were swept to indiscriminate destruction by the fierce zealots of the Christian faith.

The intense hatred which they bore to all that savoured of idolatry and paganism was terribly illustrated in Egypt, where they furiously assailed the beautiful young priestess of the ancient faith, Hypatia, and, after strip-

ping her naked, subjected her to nameless outrages, and at last cut her quivering body to pieces in the streets of Alexandria.

So pure was the practice of the new faith kept, that Christian soldiers in the Roman army refused to wear the crowns, or chaplet, won by them in battle. Death was preferable to any ceremony, rite, or observance which resembled image worship.

In course of time the Christian Church became the political ally of the temporal power, and insensibly lost the purity of its spirit. The churches became richer, prouder, and less Christian. Pagan temples were converted into churches. Christian bishops began to adopt the gorgeous ceremonial of the pagan worship. The burning of incense, the laying on of hands, the sprinkling with holy water, the confession of sins to the priest, the processions, the decoration of images, the prostrations before the priest, are all in their origin pagan observances.

The pagans exhausted their art in reproductions of Venus and Cupid, mother and son; Christians began to exhaust their art in paintings of Mary and the Christ, mother and son.

The pagans deified certain superior mortals, and prayed to them. The Christians, seizing upon this practice to further conversion, tried to infuse spirit into the same moribund superstition, and began to pray to men and women, dead and of reputed goodness, calling them Saints.

The pagans knelt before their images, adorned them with flowers, burnt incense before them, lighted tapers about them, carried them in processions, and made pilgrimages to them. The degenerate Christians began to do likewise.

The pagan images had a habit of sweating at certain emergencies, nodding at others, oozing blood at others, and curing diseases at others. It was not long before Christian images were found to possess similar powers.

The pagans kissed their images, and kissed the toe of their high priest.

Not only did the Christians adopt the pagan word, Pope, and install a priest in his office, but they also copied the pagan custom of kissing his toe.

The pagans prayed for the dead, and believed in a purgatory. When they became Christian the mass of the people discarded neither the custom nor the belief.

The pagans shaved the head of the priest, and clad him in vestments; the Christians followed the same practices.

Christianity having thus become pagan in outward form, gradually lost its inner life. The spirit of Christ no longer inspired it. Popes, enthroned at Rome, were more concerned with politics than with religion; more eager to acquire power than to save souls. The dream of Catholic empire had seized them, and they aspired to erect anew the throne of the Cæsars. Not that they hoped to govern by brute force, as universal monarchs at the head of irresistible armies; but they hoped to control, by spiritual sway, and by diplomacy and intrigue, every nation on earth.

The Pope being thus ambitious, the Church sought wealth, offices, places of influence on every hand. The princes of the Church became as worldly and as arrogant as the princes of the State. They led armies, they built palaces, they lived dissolute lives. Duty was almost a forgotten word. The convents became hotbeds of vice, and selfish ambition ran with loose rein throughout the

ecclesiastical establishment. Ignorance and superstition were universal.

Powerful and terrible as the Catholic Church was, there had been in some quarter of Europe in each century evidences of non-conformity, some protest against her devouring greed, some exception to her far-reaching tyranny.

The Albigenses and the Vaudois, as we have seen, held religious views independent of Rome, but made no war upon the Church. The Church, however, was not content to let the matter rest there, and she obliterated the heretics, giving their homes to the flames, their bodies to the grave.

Within the Church there had been scholars and teachers who were shocked at the prevailing abuses, and who had denounced them boldly, to no effect. In England (1438) the wise, learned, and dauntless Wycliffe had challenged the notice of the whole world by his heroic revolt. He had taken the side of the people, had preached to them in the fields and highways against ecclesiastical corruption, and had advocated reforms which sought to restore the Church to her pristine purity. The Church did not want attention called to her need of pristine purity; Wycliffe was tried, condemned, and silenced. His disciples were persecuted, and the heresy of the Lollards, as his followers were called, was stamped out in blood.

Thus ended the first great attempt to reform the Church from within — Wycliffe being a devout Catholic.

It was his translation of the Bible which first gave the common people of England the opportunity to read the Scriptures. Before that time it was a sealed book, so far as the multitude were concerned, for it was written

in Latin. Upon Wycliffe's Bible our King James' version is largely founded.

Wycliffe was silenced and the Lollard heresy crushed, but the doctrine had taken wings and crossed the seas. John Huss and Jerome of Prague, two eminent scholars and ecclesiastics, became converts to Wycliffe's teachings. Ardently, and with great effect, they attacked papal abuses and demanded reforms. They gathered converts, and a rebellion against Rome was seen to be imminent. The Church acted with promptitude and vigour. She beguiled Huss to Constance to stand his trial for heresy, granting him a safe-conduct which guaranteed him against harm.

He went, was tried, was condemned, was burnt, and his ashes thrown into the Rhine!

Jerome of Prague was also seized and burnt; and thus the second great effort to reform the Church from within met disastrous failure.

Emboldened by success, the Church of Rome had continually advanced her pretensions and her exactions. She believed herself not only infallible, but invincible. She held undisputed sway over Spain, Portugal, France, England, Italy, the Netherlands, and Germany. She had met resistance from an emperor of this latter realm, and had so completely humbled him that he crept barefooted to the castle gate of the Pope, and waited there three days in the snow, for admission and pardon.

At the time whereof we write, the religion of Jesus Christ had been almost wholly supplanted by paganism. The Catholic Church was Christian in name only. The Saints represented the pagan gods. The *Lives* of the Saints constituted the favorite literature of the times, and

these chronicles were stuffed with childish fables, with contemptible lies. The Gospels were unused. Devotees prayed to Saints, and relied upon "sacred relics." Pious pilgrimages, out of which many scandals grew, took the place of Christian duty. Sins were paid off with money or service. Priests peddled pardons as freely as merchants sold needles and linen.

Of the Bible the people knew next to nothing. The few copies in existence were shut up in the convent libraries. Humbugs, frauds, bogus miracles, and relics abounded. Miraculous oil was common, portions of the true cross plentiful; and such objects as St. Anne's comb and the Virgin Mary's petticoat were accessible to the devout.

The pardons for sins, obtained from the Pope, went by the name of indulgences. The price paid for these pardons varied according to the means of the sinner.

At the commencement of the sixteenth century the papal coffers were empty. Two Popes, Alexander VI. and Julius II., had squandered the earthly funds committed to their charge. The former was the libertine Pope; the latter the warrior Pope. Alexander's illegitimate children disported themselves proudly at the Vatican, and lavishly spent the revenues which flowed in from the faithful. One of these sons, Cæsar Borgia, became the wonder and the scandal of Europe, and the hero of Machiavelli's famous book, "The Prince."

This libertine Pope enriched his family out of the papal treasures, bestowing upon his sons the territories, titles, emoluments, and revenues of the Church. He was a profound politician, an adroit manager of men, an able and fearless and unscrupulous plotter. It was he who first

arrogated to the papacy the right to decide what books the faithful should read.

During the pontificate of this fearfully wicked man Savonarola arose at Florence, and made the world listen to a fierce cry for reform. Savonarola was a priest, devotedly attached to the Catholic Church, and with never a thought of rebelling against her, or of seceding from her. His great purpose was to purify, to reclaim. He denounced the ecclesiastical abuses, — licentiousness, frivolity, ignorance, tyranny, hypocrisy, — and sought to bring back the ancient spirit of austerity, simplicity, self-sacrifice, and consecration to duty.

At first he met with success. His burning zeal swept all before it, — infected others, and wrought a complete change in Florence. Houses of debauchery were closed, gambling ceased, and a penitential mood settled upon all classes. Gay and fashionable women publicly stripped themselves of their gaudy plumage, — their silks, velvets, and jewels, — and threw them down at the feet of the inspired monk. Proud cavaliers, scions of the nobility, were suddenly sobered, burnt their lascivious books and amatory verses in the public square, and loudly proclaimed their change of heart.

One reform naturally leads to another. Savonarola next denounced the political abuses of the reigning House of Medici. The denunciation was deserved. The rule of the Medici was corrupt and autocratic. The people rose against it, drove it out, and established a republic.

But the reaction soon set in. The people grew tired of the rigour of virtuous government. They pined for the good old days of sin and pleasure.

The aristocrats made common cause with the Pope, and

Savonarola was beaten down. Alexander VI. excommunicated him, and the immoral man of the Vatican had the moral man of Florence strangled and burnt. With the death of Savonarola ended the third great effort to reform the Church *from within*.

Julius II., who succeeded Alexander VI., was more of a statesman and warrior than priest. His energies were concentrated upon the task of extending the temporal power and dominions of the Popes. With this purpose he made and broke treaties, commenced and concluded wars, exacted and squandered money.

At his death the papacy owned a large increase of land and of political influence, but it was desperately in need of ready money.

Leo X., the successor of Julius II., therefore decided to replenish his earthly treasury by the sale of "indulgences."

"Go ye into all lands and sell licenses to commit sin," was the sum and substance of the instructions which he gave to his *commissioners*. By selling pardons to sinners he hoped to fill the coffers of the papacy.

The right to sell these indulgences in Germany was granted to Albert, the elector of Metz and archbishop of Madgeburg. Albert and Pope Julius were to divide the proceeds, "share and share alike."

Albert appointed as his agent in this unholy business a priest named Tetzel, a noisy, impudent, and comprehensive knave. A.D. 1517

Assisted by his brother monks of the Dominican order, Tetzel went up and down throughout the land, selling his pardons. Every sinner was called on to come forward and buy a pardon for his sins. If he had no sins of his

own, he was urged to buy a pardon for the sins of some good friend, male or female. Not only were pardons sold for sins already committed, but also for those which the purchasers might yet commit.

It is said that one man, disgusted at the way Tetzel was scandalizing the wise few, and gulling the ignorant many, bought from the noisy rogue a pardon for a sin he intended to commit. Having obtained the paper, he waylaid Tetzel, beat him within an inch of his life, and then, when arraigned for the offence, pleaded Tetzel's pardon, given in advance, and thus escaped punishment.

The historian Robertson gives the following as an account of the terms in which Tetzel and his associates spoke to the people when asking them to buy these indulgences : —

"If any man" (said they) "purchase letters of indulgence, his soul may rest secure with respect to its salvation. The souls confined in purgatory for whose redemption indulgences are purchased, as soon as the money tinkles in the chest, instantly escape from that place of torment and ascend into heaven. That the efficacy of indulgences was so great, that the most heinous sins would be remitted and expiated by them, and the person be freed both from punishment and guilt ; that this was the unspeakable gift of God in order to reconcile men to himself ; that the cross erected by the preachers of indulgences was as efficacious as the cross of Christ itself. Lo ! the heavens are open ; if you enter not now, when will you enter ? For twelve pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory ; and are you so ungrateful that you will not rescue your

parent from torment? If you had but one coat you ought to strip yourself instantly, and sell it in order to purchase such benefits."

The same author, Robertson, gives likewise a copy of the indulgences sold to the faithful. It is as follows: —

"May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by his authority, that of his blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy Pope, granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first from all ecclesiastical censures in whatever manner they have been incurred, and then from all thy sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy See; and as far as the keys of the holy Church extend, I remit to you all punishment which you deserve in purgatory on their account; and I restore you to the holy sacraments of the Church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which you possessed at baptism; so that when you die, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if you shall not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when you are at the point of death."

Near by where these fine doings were in progress lived a bull-necked, high-tempered, coarse-fibred, strong-minded monk, named Martin Luther. He was the son of poor parents, but had received a learned education. He was an intense student and an original thinker. He was a born rebel and reformer. Against his father's will he had taken holy orders, and from that time onward his life was "a battle and a march." While in the convent he studied the Bible profoundly, and soon began to compare

its teachings with the teachings and the practices which were prevalent around him. The comparison started him on that road of dissent and protest which finally led to his open rupture with the Church.

At the time, however, he was an humble monk, a devout Catholic, a Doctor of Divinity in the university at Wittenberg in Saxony. His mind was full of doubts, difficulties, and rebellious questions, but as yet he had said nothing except to his confidential friends.

The conduct of Tetzel, however, decided him in his course. The brazen impudence and gross impiety with which he peddled pardons around the country was more than Luther could endure.

On the night of October 31, 1517, Luther walked through the streets of Wittenberg alone, and nailed to the church door a series of propositions, ninety-five in number, which may be regarded as the corner-stone of the Reformation.

In substance these ninety-five propositions set forth:—

That true repentance for sin ends only with life;

That the Pope can remit no penalty which he has not imposed;

That no man can be saved from divine punishment by the Pope's pardon;

That the laws of ecclesiastical penance should be imposed on the living and not upon the dead;

That the Pope has no power over the souls in purgatory;

That if the Pope can release souls from purgatory he should do so out of pity and mercy, and not for money;

That sins are not forgiven without repentance;

That true repentance brings pardon from on high, without price.

These propositions of Luther, enforced and expounded by him in the pulpit, created an immense sensation throughout Germany. The soil, moreover, was ready for the seed. The hour and the man had at last met. The lives, teachings, and works of Wycliffe, Huss, Jerome, Reuchlin, Hutten, and Erasmus had prepared the minds of men for great changes.

Erasmus, especially, had wielded a powerful influence in the direction of reform. Though a monk, he had mercilessly exposed the greed, ignorance, vice, and hypocrisy of the monks; and had preached the necessity for correction of the abuses with infinite force and persistence. To the Pope himself he had carried his accusations against the monks, fearlessly arraigning them for the crimes of kidnapping, gambling, drunkenness, immorality, and murder itself. He had scornfully exposed their false miracles, their forgeries, their pious frauds.

So well had Erasmus done his work that the common saying, in after years, was that "Erasmus laid the egg of the Reformation and Luther hatched it."

Without the work which Luther did the writings of Erasmus would probably have borne no more fruit than those of Wycliffe.

A corrupt organization cannot be reformed from within. There are too many members of it who are interested in keeping things as they are. They combat changes. They discourage reformers, and, if need be, silence them.

It requires pressure from without to compel any organization to purge itself.

Erasmus was a scholar, a thinker, a man of books, a hero

of a cosy corner in some dim and dusty library. He was no fighter. He was witty, polished, lovable, sound-hearted, and right-minded; but he was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made. He was willing to give his pen and his voice to the right; but he meant to stop there. He had no intention of daring the stake or risking the dungeon. Give him a warm hearth, a soft student's gown, a glass of rich old wine, and Erasmus would slay you monkish Philistines all day — with his pen. But if the work demanded a fighter, a man who would stoutly meet furious monks on the streets and dare them to their worst, a man who would draw down upon himself the wrath of an emperor and brave it, a man who would challenge the thunders of papal excommunication and laugh at them, — that man was not Erasmus, he was Luther.

And after yielding to Luther unstinted praise for his genius and his courage and his devotion to the cause, we must bear in mind that he succeeded because the political advantage in the contest was on his side.

The German rulers did not particularly love the Popes. Papal arrogance had humbled more than one German emperor. It had not been forgotten that Henry IV. had been made to stand barefooted in the snow for three days, waiting till the insolence of a Pope should be sufficiently gratified by a German emperor's humiliation.

At Rome, the papal courtiers made every German a butt of ridicule.

In Germany itself, the heavy hand of papal exactions in the way of first-fruits, tithes, etc., lay with intolerable weight.

There was a universal feeling that Germany was systematically plundered to satisfy the rapacity of the court of Rome.

No money ever came back to Germany from Rome; once there, there it stayed.

Hence the German princes, who were almost independent rulers, fretted and grew restive under the continual drain of German wealth toward Rome. When the Church took so much, where was the State to get anything? The princes wanted less of German money to go abroad. They needed some of it themselves.

Hence, when Pope Julius II., upon the pretence that he was in want of funds to complete St. Peter's Church at Rome, began the sale of indulgences among the German people, and was about to draw to Rome much of the loose cash of Germany in exchange for the worthless bits of paper, the resentment of the German nobles was great.

The strongest appeal which Luther made to the princes who supported him was the plea in behalf of Germany as against Rome.

"Don't let Rome rob Germany," had, probably, much more to do with rallying the German nobles to Luther's cause than all of his ninety-five propositions put together.

He aroused national pride and national interest against foreign exactions and foreign insolence; and this is the chief reason why the Reformation succeeded so rapidly and so well in Germany.

The bulwark of Protestantism in its beginning was the Elector of Saxony, Frederick the Wise, who had refused the imperial crown. Without this tower of strength,

Luther had been lost. Yet, that Frederick was not on principle opposed to the sale of indulgences is evidenced by the fact that he himself had once obtained from the Pope the privilege of selling indulgences in Saxony, for the purpose of raising funds with which to build a bridge over the Elbe.

It does not enter into the plan of this work to follow the Reformation further.

Briefly, we may say that at first Luther had no thought of doing more than putting a stop to an abuse. He hoped to correct it in the Church. The Pope was deaf to reason, and proceeded against him in the same spirit of vindictiveness which had pursued Savonarola, Huss, and Jerome. But times were changed. The German rulers felt their interests to be the same as Luther's. When the Pope launched his official bulls against Luther, the dauntless Reformer could venture to make a bonfire out of such documents. Summoned before the young German emperor, Charles V., he fearlessly went, trusting partly to a safe-conduct, but more to the known temper of the German nobles.

Retraction being demanded of him, he refused to retract. The pious monks having suggested to the emperor that Luther should meet the fate of Huss, in spite of his safe-conduct, the German nobles showed such readiness to draw weapons that the monkish proposition met no favour.

Luther was let to go his way, and the Reformation was thenceforth an assured fact. He lived, and he worked many years. He wrote many things he ought never to have written, held many beliefs that would now shock enlightened people, and loved the good things of

life to an extent that was emphatically human. But, after all is said, Luther remains one of the few master-figures in the world's history. Judged by his work, he was great; judged by his motive, he was great. Like Mohammed, he enjoyed endless opportunities of enriching himself; like Mohammed, he died poor. He gave as freely as he received, and after his death, his wife was reduced to beg her bread through the streets of Wittenberg.

Luther was the gladiator of the Reformation; Melancthon was its scholar, and Zwingli its soundest theologian. Luther was so robust and turbulent and indefatigable that he obscured the milder and quieter Melancthon and Zwingli; but it is worth noting that modern Protestant creeds are further removed from Luther and Calvin than from Melancthon and Zwingli.

In France, the teachings of Luther were favourably received by a large number of the nobles and a still larger number of the people.

Lefèvre was the leader of the Reformers. His translation of the New Testament appeared in 1522. Having been singled out by the Sorbonne for attack, he thought it prudent to retire, first to Meaux, and finally to Strasbourg. His disciple, Farel, fled to Geneva, where he founded the celebrated school of theology associated with the name of Calvin.

The most illustrious of the French Protestants, however, was John Calvin. His whole life appears to have been one long agony of toil, mental, physical, and spiritual. He was rigorous with himself and with others. He was terribly in earnest in all things. There was absolutely no levity in his nature. No frivolous thought

could have resisted a moment the fierce fires of his intense mind. He was gloomy, severe, concentrated, intolerant. Fleeing for his life from Paris, where the Catholics wanted to burn him, he finally settled in Geneva, where he burnt Servetus.

In this city he erected a theocratic government, and ruled the people despotically in all matters, social, political, individual, and collective. The people grew tired of it after a while and forced him to leave them; but subsequently they recalled him, and he became their guide and ruler during the remainder of his life.

Calvin was a man of towering intellect, absolute singleness of purpose, amazing force of character, and unbending will. Just as he sent Servetus to the stake, he would have gone himself rather than apostatize.

Pleasure was nothing to Calvin. Duty was everything. No flowery bed of ease had any temptation for him; the rough, the painful, the rigorous task was his by preference. Luther was warm-blooded, impetuous, large-natured, open-hearted, full of lusty life and health and human passion.

Calvin was sternly repellent, censorious, ascetic, sickly, and unsympathetic. We must respect Calvin, but we cannot love him. It is singular that the French nation, a gay, genial, sympathetic people, as we are told, should have produced the most saturnine of all the Protestant apostles.

Calvin rendered to the Reformation in France the service of systematizing its doctrine, and of organizing its discipline; but his bad health and gloomy mind had much to do, perhaps, with formulating the most forbidding of all the Protestant creeds. The French, as a

people, were not drawn to the Reformation, and Calvin's peculiarly dark and mystifying doctrines were probably, to some degree, responsible for it.

The spirit of reform, once aroused, is difficult to check or control. The Protestants found it so. Their leaders had encouraged the masses to read and think. The lower orders were suffering many other wrongs besides those inflicted by the Church. The temporal power bore down cruelly upon the peasants with unjust exactions of many kinds. Therefore, when Luther and his compeers challenged the right of the Church to oppress the people, the people took advantage of the situation to challenge the right of the State to oppress them.

There was a great uprising of the peasants in many parts of Europe. In some places the tumult was caused by a handful of noisy demagogues whose appeals were made to the basest passions of the multitude. The poor were inflamed against the rich, and the demand for an equal division of wealth found its usual favour in the eyes of those who had no property. Churches were sacked, palaces burnt, towns plundered, and murders done by these wretched fanatics before they were in turn murdered by those whom they wished to despoil.

In Germany, where the peasant revolt reached the largest proportions, there was much reason in the demand for reform. Their grievances were set forth with pathetic power. The people demanded the free election of the parish clergy, the appropriation of a portion of the tithes to the support of the old and the poor. They demanded the abolition of serfdom. They demanded that the exclusive right of the nobles to hunt and fish be abolished, and that the meadows, forests, and fields

be restored to the ownership of the community. They demanded that limits be set to taxes, dues, and services, so that they could no longer be arbitrarily increased. They demanded the equal administration of justice.

Surely this programme of reform was not so very wild and unreasonable, yet all the princes of Germany, supported by the immense weight of Luther's endorsement, united to beat down the peasants and to leave unredressed the wrongs of the lower orders.

With horrible cruelty the ill-armed and unorganized peasants were butchered throughout the land. One hundred and fifty thousand persons are said to have lost their lives in the Peasant War, which brought upon Germany all the horrors of civil strife. One writer, whose heart was with the lower orders in this fight, calls the peasant insurrection the "terrible scream of oppressed humanity."

The lot of the defeated peasants became harder than ever after the war was over.

The Catholics used these disturbances with decided effect, in exciting in the minds of the upper and ruling classes a dread that the Reformation, if not checked, would lead to social anarchy. In France, particularly, the communistic movements of such men as John of Leyden, Thomas Münzer, Karlstadt, and John Mathieson, together with the excesses committed by their deluded followers, had a most unfortunate influence upon the mind of Francis I. at the moment when he appeared to be on the point of giving his protection, if not his faith, to the Protestant creed.

After the Peasant War was over, there yet remained a long period of turmoil and bloodshed, before the Reformation was to be allowed to work out its mission in peace.

The Thirty Years' War was to follow with its immense waste of wealth and life. From the interior of Bohemia to the mouth of the Scheldt, and from the banks of the Po to the shores of the Baltic, towns and villages were reduced to ashes, harvests destroyed, and great districts laid waste.

A million men were to die for religion in Germany, just as one hundred thousand had perished under the atrocities of Philip II. and Alva and Torquemada, while Catholic Spain was furiously striving to kill the Protestant faith in Holland.

For nearly a century the great contest went on. Popes and kings fed the flames of almost universal war. Breaking out in the interior of Germany, it had burnt there, year in and year out, with intense fierceness. Deeds more savage were never done since Adam died. The sack of Magdeburg by the Catholic general, Tilly, even now chills one with horror. Protestants were not less cruel when the day of retaliation was theirs. Preachers on both sides prayed fervently while the throat-cutting progressed, and on each side there was a sincere conviction that the smile of God rested on *that* faction, and his curse on the other.

Nation after nation had been drawn into the struggle until all Europe was more or less engaged. England, too, was involved. The Peasant War, the Civil Wars in France, the Netherlands War, and the Thirty Years' War were but so many successive acts in the bloody drama wherein enthroned tyranny, religious and secular, incited millions of men to slay each other on the pretence of religion.

Nowhere did the contest take a deeper hold than in the

Netherlands — that territory embraced within the limits of modern Belgium and Holland. Here a few cities scattered through the northern provinces bore the brunt of what appeared to be a hopeless struggle against political despotism and ecclesiastical tyranny. The southern provinces remained, for the most part, loyal to king and Pope; it was in Holland that the Dutch Republic rose, through long years of battle, to give the modern world the first practical lesson in the arduous achievement of civil and religious liberty.

Less than two millions of mechanics and common labourers took up arms against a monarch whose dominions embraced a third of the world as then known; and, under the marvellous leadership of William the Silent, taught mankind how the despotism of Church and State might be broken.

William of Orange was one of the great nobles of the German Empire, whose estates were vast and whose revenues were royal. At Brussels he lived with all the splendour of a king, and at his hospitable board a continuous round of sumptuous entertainment welcomed all comers, from the emperor and his grandees, down to citizens in the humblest walks of life.

At the early age of fifteen, William had become the confidential friend of the Emperor Charles V., after having served him as page for several years. Thus he was reared in the innermost circles of imperial favour, viewed from behind the scenes the varied drama of international politics, and learned to weigh the actual worth of the men and the measures which were controlling Europe.

When only twenty-one, he was made general-in-chief of one of the imperial armies.

It was upon William's shoulder that Charles V. had leaned when going through the ceremony of abdication at Brussels; it was by William's hand that Charles had sent to his brother and successor in the imperial office, Ferdinand, the insignia of the discrowned monarch. It was William who had negotiated the treaty between France and Spain, which Philip so anxiously desired.

Together with the Duke of Alva he had been selected by Henry III. for the due execution of the terms of peace.

It was while residing in Paris as hostage that he came into possession of the secret which changed the tenor of his life.

Hunting with the king in the forest of Vincennes, William and Henry one day found themselves alone, and the king began to converse with the prince upon the subject of the grand design which Philip II. had proposed to the king through the Duke of Alva. Henry naturally supposed that William was in the secret — he being a good Catholic and a fellow-hostage with Alva. The king proceeded to reveal the proposed plan, which was to unite the energies and powers of the two kings for the extermination of "that vile vermin," the heretics. The Netherlands was to be the first object of attack, and Spanish troops were to be sent to aid the faithful in crushing Protestantism.

William of Orange had been kept in ignorance of this detestable plot between the kings of France and Spain, but he said nothing to disabuse the mind of Henry, and it was his discretion in this memorable interview which won him the name of William the Silent.

The king of France had unwittingly committed an egregious error, for Orange was profoundly horrified by

what he had heard, and determined to take measures to protect the threatened people. He had no religious sympathy whatever with the Reformers, but he could not, he said, "but feel compassion for so many virtuous men and women thus devoted to massacre."

William had been appointed stadtholder of the provinces of Holland, Friesland, and Utrecht, and had received the confidential instructions of Philip II., who trusted the prince as the emperor had done.

Philip II. desired William to enforce the laws against heresy, comprised in the celebrated "Edict of 1550."

By the terms of this edict no citizen was to "print, copy, keep, conceal, sell, buy, or give any book or writing made by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, or any other heretic, nor break or injure the images of the Virgin or the Saints, nor to hold or attend any meeting where heretics teach."

All lay persons were forbidden "*to converse or dispute concerning the Scriptures*," especially on any doubtful or difficult matters, or to *read*, *teach*, or *expound* the Scriptures, unless they had studied theology and been approved by some renowned university, or to preach or to entertain any of the opinions of the heretics mentioned.

It was Luther's opinion that a monk could not sell a divine pardon to the miscreant who was about to commit a vile crime. By the Edict of 1550, it was a crime to hold the same opinion as Luther upon this subject.

It was the opinion of Zwingli that sacramental wine did not become the actual blood of Christ when a priest said a few words over it; and neither did a piece of bread become Christ's actual flesh. Zwingli believed that the wine and bread were merely symbolical of

Christ's blood and body. To agree with Zwingli was a crime under the Act of 1550.

But the law against freedom of thought was far more sweeping even than this. No one but an authorized priest was allowed to read, teach, expound, or talk about the Scriptures. The cowl of the monk was drawn over the imperial intellect of man, and the monk was to say when and how God's will should be made known to a lost world. No matter how ignorant or depraved the monk might be, the good and the brave and the gifted must crouch at his feet, must let his mind dominate theirs, or they were criminals.

This being the law, it is important to know the punishment prescribed for its violation.

The Edict of 1550 had only one punishment for those who disobeyed it, — *Death.*

Criminals who *did not persist* in the crime of heresy were to be slain, the men with the sword, the women by burial alive ; criminals who *did* persist were to perish by fire.

Upon all those who lodged, entertained, fed, clothed, or otherwise favoured a *suspected* heretic, or one known to be such, the same doom was pronounced. *Failure to betray* a heretic was punished in like manner.

Such was the horrible code which Philip II. expected his trusted official, William the Silent, to enforce.

It is not germane to this story of France to trace the progress of the tragedy which dragged its slow length along in Holland — a tragedy as ghastly as any which history records.

The part which William the Silent acted in it made him one of the world's foremost men, and he was to the

Dutch patriots what Washington was in the War of American Independence, — the indispensable man.

At first a Catholic and a royalist, loyal to his Church and his king; then a patriot, resisting the despotism of his Church and his king; then a Lutheran and a rebel determined to wrench Holland from the control of the Catholic Church and the Spanish king: these were the successive stages which marked the evolution of the wealthiest Catholic prince of the empire, in the Netherlands, toward leadership of Dutch tanners, dyers, traders, and mechanics in their terrible struggle for home rule and freedom of worship.

There never was a man better fitted by nature to enjoy a life of elegant ease than the Prince of Orange. He was a scholar of fine attainments, a courtier of unrivalled grace and skill, a diplomat and warrior of renown, a genial companion, an eloquent speaker, and a writer of rare power.

To enjoy to the utmost all these advantages was in his nature. No man was ever more eminently fitted for the upper walks of life, to breathe the atmosphere of refined luxury, and to lap himself in the delights of the epicure. To keep indefinitely the power and the opulence which were already his, nothing more was needed than that he should let religious persecution and political tyranny do as they liked with the liberties of Holland and the lives of heretics.

Very nobly he took sides with the weak against the strong; very nobly he gave himself, his ease, wealth, station, and life to the cause of civil and religious freedom. It was a great renunciation of honours, of peace, of security, of riches, of pleasures. The regal palace in

Brussels and the royal revenues were abandoned for a citizen's simple life in an humble house in Delft. The favour of the most powerful king on earth was surrendered for the leadership of his own people in a struggle which appeared desperate, and which was certain to bring to him infinite toil, sacrifice, and danger.

For very many years William the Silent was matched in mortal combat with the forces of Philip II., and with marvellous skill he held the great king at bay. Alva might come and slay and burn; Parma might come and slay and burn; William the Silent was no match for either in the field, and yet they utterly failed to subdue him. Dealing with crafty men, William was himself crafty. Dealing with men who would deceive, William would himself deceive. Pitted against men who set spies upon him, William set spies on them. In the very cabinet of Philip II. a spy did service for William. Every despatch which Philip patiently wrote or revised, if it in any way concerned the Netherlands, was copied by Castillo, the confidential secretary of Philip, and sent immediately to William. Thus Philip's great foe knew all of Philip's plans, knew how to thwart them. Castillo's crime was at last discovered, and the spy was pulled apart by four horses.

With all the Catholic powers of Europe against him, William struggled with Washington's courage, Washington's stubbornness, Washington's unbending determination to win in spite of strong foes and weak friends. William fought for loftier principles than those involved in Washington's struggle. Freedom of conscience and liberty of worship had already been achieved long before the War of American Independence, and to no man's hero-

ism are we more deeply indebted for those treasures than to William of Orange.

To this holy cause he not only sacrificed his fortune, but his life. Philip II. could not crush him otherwise, and he compassed his assassination.

But the deeds of the great live after them; William had so deeply planted the tree of religious and political liberty that Philip II., with all his strength, could not pluck it up.

The struggle he had inaugurated and so long sustained did not die with him. It continued and it succeeded. Mingled with the pangs of death to Philip II., when a foul and fatal disease had laid him low, was the consciousness that he had utterly failed in the Netherlands. He knew that heresy was intrenched there beyond his power to dislodge it; he knew that political independence there was practically achieved, and that its recognition was but a question of time.

The Dutch Republic was the herald of the great upward movements of the masses which have so moulded the destinies of nations. Under the grandson of William the Silent, England accomplished her revolution of 1688, whereby her civil liberties were won; and the inspiration of the example set in Holland nerved the American statesmen at a later day when their own people resisted tyranny.

At the close of the struggle came the peace of Westphalia (1648), which ended the drama, and each religion recognized that the other was not to be battered down with cannon.

That the Reformation succeeded to the extent it did was owing to the causes already stated. That it failed

to do more was due to the dissensions among the Protestant leaders, angry controversies over differences of creed, and the revolutionary spirit it aroused among the masses — to the terror of the ruling classes. The reaction arising from these causes was powerfully reënforced by the aroused energies of the menaced Church. The Jesuits, fearless and tireless, went to work in all countries to counteract the reform movement. The horrors of the Inquisition frightened it out of Spain and crippled it in France. Bloody persecution checked it in Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland. Last but not least of the causes of her preservation, the Church made common cause with European kings against the spirit of democracy which was embodied in the religious revolt. "Support me," said the Pope, in effect, to princes, potentates, and powers, "else the overthrow of the Church will be the prelude to the overthrow of the State." Thus the altar and the throne united to preserve their power, and to a great extent the union succeeded.

CHAPTER XXIV

HENRY THE SECOND

(1547-1559)

A.D. 1547 HENRY II. had none of his father's geniality of disposition, none of the magnetism, brilliancy, grace, and dash which has ever thrown a certain radiance around Francis I.

Henry was cold, formal, and dull, though at heart he was not more selfish, more callous, nor more cynical than his suave and courtly father had been.

There was a great rush of the courtiers for offices, honours, and pensions at Henry's accession.

In a few weeks the treasure which Francis had accumulated for the German war he contemplated, was gone. The Guises, and the old Constable Montmorency, and their favourites got the lion's share.

The mistress of the young king was Diana of Poitiers —she who had served Francis in the same capacity, and for many years she was more powerful than the nominal queen.

While Henry II. was still enjoying the festivities attendant upon his accession to the throne, a revolt occurred in Guienne, caused by an arbitrary increase of the salt-tax. The people of Guienne contended that they were exempt from this tax by ancient privilege. Francis I. had disregarded the privilege and enforced the tax. The

people rose against it, and Francis had marched against them with his army. Unable to resist further, the people had humbled themselves and prayed pardon. Francis handsomely forgave them for being ill-humoured on account of an illegal tax, and let them off with a fine of 200,000 francs. The illegal tax, of course, was left in force; and, just before his death, Francis had increased it. The spirit of dissatisfaction again spread, and led to the revolt already mentioned. The peasants, goaded to madness, broke out into deeds of lawlessness. The director-general of the salt-tax was slain, and two of his collectors were beaten to death and their bodies thrown into the river. "Go, wicked salt-taxers, and salt the fish of the Charente," cried the infuriated mob as they cast the dead men into the stream.

When tidings of these things reached the king, his wrath was great. That the tax itself was illegal did not enter into the consideration of the matter at all. That the people had a second time objected to paying it was an aggravation of the offence, and the old Constable Montmorency declared that the rebels ought to be exterminated and replaced by a new variety of people altogether. The king intrusted the constable with the task of bringing the offenders to proper punishment. Gathering up a force of mercenary soldiers, mere professional cut-throats, Montmorency marched into Guienne, directing his movement upon the city of Bordeaux, the centre of the revolt. A.D. 1548

As soon as the insurgents learned that the army was coming, a panic ensued. They were in no condition to offer resistance; they had not organized any rebellion, or dreamt of any armed collision with their king. They had

simply given way to an ungovernable fit of passion provoked by the tyranny of the tax as well as its hardships — the long wars and great expenditures of Francis having reduced the peasants to a condition of extreme misery.

The people of Bordeaux, trembling with fear, and eagerly ready to make submission, and to give satisfaction for the crimes which a few hotheads had committed, sent a delegation to meet the constable to tender him the keys of the city, and to invite him to come down the river to Bordeaux upon a boat which the anxious penitents had magnificently equipped for his accommodation.

"Away with your keys and your boat," cried the constable violently; "I have other keys here with which I mean to make entrance into Bordeaux," and he pointed to his cannon.

Following up his brutal threat he advanced upon the unhappy city, battered a breach in its walls, entered with his army, and inflicted upon the helpless citizens all the rigours of the war.

The three men who had beaten the tax-collectors to death were burnt. "Go ye," cried Montmorency to them, "and grill the fish of the Charente which ye salted with the bodies of your king's officers, rabid hounds that ye are."

Two of the ringleaders of the revolt were broken on the wheel, wearing upon their heads, the while, red-hot crowns of iron. One hundred and forty other persons were put to death in various ways, and more than a hundred were publicly whipped.

One hundred and twenty of the citizens were made to dig up with their fingers the corpse of the director-general who had been murdered.

Ruinous fines were laid upon the town council, the local parliament, and the wealthy citizens. Even the towers of the public buildings were stripped of their bells and their clocks. The inhabitants of the city, in mass, were compelled to assemble and fall upon their knees in the streets and to beg for mercy and pardon.

Montmorency was at length satisfied that the spirit of the people was sufficiently chastened, and he withdrew. This was in 1548; next year King Henry sold to the people of Guienne the almost complete abolition of the salt-tax for 200,000 crowns of gold.

It was at this period that Stephen de la Boétie wrote the eloquent treatise against monarchy and tyranny which has kept his name in honoured remembrance.

The younger nobles of France had been greatly dissatisfied with the last treaty of peace concluded between Charles V. and Francis.

The emperor, having won the victory of Mühlberg (1547) over the German Protestants, was now all-powerful in Spain, Italy, and Germany. But he had aroused the jealousy and distrust of the German princes, and they were ready to betray him. Maurice of Saxony, one of his generals, turned suddenly against him, and came near making him a prisoner at Innsbruck. A.D. 1552

A deputation from these discontented princes, headed by the Count of Nassau, visited Paris, and urged Henry II. to invade the Netherlands, and secretly informed him that certain of the German towns were ready to open their gates to him.

The ardour of the younger nobility carried the day, and France again went to war with Charles V.

The cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, threw open

A.D. 1552 their gates to the French king, and the German emperor made a signal failure in his effort to retake them. He retired from Metz, after a two months' siege, completely baffled, saying, "I see that Fortune is like a woman; she prefers a young king to an old emperor."

A.D. 1553 Although his army captured and destroyed the important fortress of Thérouanne soon after, the advantage of the campaign remained with the French.

The war dragged its weary length along, without important results upon either side for some time longer, and then everybody grew tired, and peace was made.

France retained the cities she had taken, and continued to hold them until the German war of 1870.

A.D. 1556 Charles V., worn out, disappointed, and diseased, resigned his sceptre and retired to the monastery of Yuste in Spain to nurse his gout and his superstition, and his son Philip II. succeeded him.

The French, at the instigation of the Pope, who accused Charles V. of attempting to poison him, broke the treaty

A.D. 1557 of peace (1557), recommenced the war, and suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Spaniards before St. Quentin.

"Is my son at Paris?" inquired Charles V. in his hermitage, when the news of Philip's great victory was brought to him. So crushing had been the French defeat that Paris would probably have fallen had Philip marched promptly upon it.

But Philip had no dash; the golden moment passed, and while the brave Coligny, behind flimsy defences at St. Quentin, held the entire Spanish army in check for two weeks, France was gathering her resources for a desperate resistance.

The man who had so brilliantly defended Metz, the Duke of Guise, was hastily summoned from Italy to defend France. He was appointed commander of all the forces and was given powers almost unlimited. He rose to the occasion superbly. Making a dash at Calais, A.D. 1558 which the English had held for 210 years, he captured it, to the immense astonishment of the good folks of both England and France, who had considered it a settled fact that the place was impregnable. Thus at one stroke he inspired the French, and dispirited the Spaniards and their English allies.

The loss of Calais so afflicted that amiable person, Bloody Queen Mary of England, that she worried herself to death about it. "Open my heart," said she, "and Calais will be found written on it."

The Duke of Guise followed up his success by taking several other very important towns and cities, and the scales of war were once more considerably in favour of the French.

Peace was made, — the secret motive being to unite the two royal houses of France and Spain in a grand crusade against Protestantism. The failure of Philip to invade France, after the signal victory of St. Quention, can only be explained by events which occurred afterwards. His whole being was wrapped up in the design to become the crowned hero of Catholicism, commissioned by God and the Pope to extinguish heresy. To this controlling purpose of his life all others were subordinated. He knew that in order to succeed he must have the co-operation of the Catholic kings of France. It would never do to waste the strength of Catholic Spain in constant strife with Catholic France. They must be united,

and thus united they must put down heresy. Such was Philip's plan, and as soon as he could gain the confidence of Henry II. and his advisers, the war was stopped.

A.D. 1559 By the published terms of the treaty, France retained her conquests of Calais, Boulogne, Metz, Toul, and Verdun, but gave up 189 towns and cities in Italy, Flanders, and Corsica; and Philip II. was to marry Henry's daughter.

Festivities ensued at Paris, — dancings, feastings, and tournaments. King Henry II., taking part in the tournament, was mortally wounded near the close of the last day, by a splinter from the lance of his antagonist, the Count of Montgomery.

This was June 29, 1559.

During the brief reign of this monarch he had put to death ninety-seven persons for the crime of not being Catholics. He had attended the burning of one of these wicked people, and had apparently derived much mental and spiritual comfort from the sight.

At the very time when he was profiting by Protestant help in the Netherlands, he was closing the schools and the churches to the Protestants in France, by the Edict of Châteaubriant, and was speeding the willing feet of persecution by securing to informers one-third of the property of their Protestant victims.

To play truant is an expression still used. Originally it referred to the "hedge-schools" established in the rural neighbourhoods, to escape the tyranny of the Catholics in the cities, and to play "truant" meant to go to the country school.

The splendid revival of learning and of art progressed rapidly during the reign of Francis I. and Henry II.

The gloomy castle was replaced by the graceful palace, and the interior decorations were carried to an elaborate and artistic finish which have never since been surpassed.

The French kings and nobles were enraptured by the splendour of the fine arts which they had seen in Italy, and Italian architects, engineers, painters, and sculptors were employed to reproduce in France the glories of their native land.

Scholars were never held in higher esteem than during this universal reawakening of the human mind. They were courted by kings and wielded vast influence. When Erasmus produced a book, the event was of international importance; his thought carried weight in three kingdoms — England, France, and Germany.

A monarch so haughty as Henry VIII. thought it no loss of dignity to enter the lists with Luther in theological dispute.

Francis I. made his court warm with welcome to men of genius and of scholarly renown, himself dabbled in verse, and could boast of a sister whose love-tales, none too chaste, have come down to our own times and found readers among millions of people who never heard of Francis himself.

The chains of servitude were being broken in all spheres of thought at the very time that political absolutism was being more firmly riveted.

In the Church the flames of revolt were burning in all civilized lands. Red-hot iron was driven through the tongue of the free-thinker, and his body roasted over slow fires, but the mind had won a glimpse of liberty, and the spirit of resistance to superstition and dogma was not to be quelled.

In literature, dead languages and antique methods were challenged, and the monopoly they had enjoyed was giving way to living tongues and modern forms.

Rabelais, veiling his meaning under fantastic symbolism and colossal burlesque, had seemed to mock at the religious impostures of the times, and to condemn with sweeping satire the greed and incapacity of both Church and State.

Montaigne's "Essays" appeared—a distinctly modern work in its thought and expression; the ancient sacred mystery-plays were put aside, and the first drama, in its modern form, was written by Jodelle, and acted before Henry II. in 1552.

In science, discoveries were made; Plato began to encroach upon Aristotle, and in surgery Ambroise Paré had the temerity to deny that boiling oil was the best ointment for gun-shot wounds, and that burning was better than ligatures to stop the blood of severed arteries.

The activity in all departments of mental work was hearty and exultant, and in the exclamation of Ulrich von Hutten we catch the true feeling of men of letters of that day:—

"Oh, age! letters flourish, the minds of men are reawakened; it is a joy to be alive!"

A.D. 1559 Henry II. was succeeded by his oldest son, Francis II., a frail and sickly boy of sixteen, who was ruled by his uncles through his wife, the beautiful Mary of Scotland.

The country at this time was impoverished by war and the treasury empty. Disbanded soldiers infested the highways, living by pillage and committing all sorts of outrages. The court was divided into three parties. The first was composed of the king's two uncles, the

Duke of Guise and the cardinal of Lorraine, representing and leading the whole body of the Catholic Church. They were supported also by the Pope and by Philip II., king of Spain. Controlling the young king through their niece Mary of Scotland, the Guises were the actual rulers of France.

The second party was headed by the Admiral Coligny. Having adopted the Reform faith, he became the recognized chief of the Protestant cause, its counsellor in peace, its leader in war, its guide, its fortress, its hope. Acting with him were the Prince of Condé, a far less weighty man, and the Constable Montmorency, who sided with the Protestants at first because of his jealousy of the Guises. The king of Navarre, Antoine of Bourbon, who had been dispossessed of his kingdom by Philip II. of Spain, was the nominal head of the anti-Guise party, but he was a vacillating person and amounted to little.

The third party was the weakest of all — that of Catherine de' Medici, the queen-mother. Her policy it was to play off each of the above parties against the other, preserving to herself a balance of power between them.

In pursuance of this programme, she was first for Guise against Coligny, then for Coligny against Guise, but ever and always for Catherine.

Much odium has been heaped upon this woman. She bears one of the blackest names in history. That she was perfidious is shown by the very nature of her policy ; but perfidy, of the sort which succeeds, is one of the rare accomplishments of statecraft and diplomacy. That she was fertile in resource and possessed of political ability is shown by her triumph in steering her fortunes through

all the contending ambitions of rival parties, and staying, more or less, on top all the while.

Apparently she had no faith in the adage that persecution cannot put down opinion. She acted as though she thought that persecution, piled on heavily enough, would crush its victims. And it is certain that Protestantism, which failed in France, owed its failure chiefly to this fat Italian woman who looked impassive, but who had deadly claws.

The doctrines of the Reformation had made great headway in France, and at this time one-tenth of the population, it is estimated, were Protestants. The Catholics were very restive under the threatened loss of power and wealth, and clamoured for the Inquisition.

This institution causes generous souls to shrink, even now, when they think of it. The sudden and arbitrary arrests, the dark and noisome dungeons, the stretching of the victim upon the rack, and the pulling of arm and leg out of socket to enforce confession; the final punishment of burning at the stake, or of boiling slowly in oil, or of binding the naked wretch upon the horrible wheel, which bristled with hungry iron teeth, and beating his body until it was mere bloody pulp, — leaving it there to rot, — these were the terrors of the Inquisition. One hundred thousand men and women perished under them in Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands.

In Portugal, Italy, and Spain the Inquisition not only halted the march of the Reformation, but stamped it out. As an engine of repression it was fearfully effective. Its methods were cunning, secret, untiring, ruthless. It was backed by all the power of the State; it was inspired by all the zeal of the Church. To fall into its hands was

almost inevitable ruin, for if the guilt of the accused could be established by proof, he need expect no mercy; and if proofs were lacking, he was tortured with such diabolical ferocity that few men could resist the temptation to confess in order to escape the agony.

Bad men abused it to get rid of enemies; and there is no doubt whatever that many a good Catholic, male or female, owed fearful deaths to the malice of personal foes who took advantage of the Inquisition to strike them down. Neither is there any doubt that the priests, in charge of the awful machinery of the Inquisition, abused their resistless influence, and prostituted it to the vilest purposes — extorting from men and from women concessions and submissions which only the fear of what would befall them, if they provoked priestly wrath, could drive them to make.

Henry II. had attempted to legalize the Inquisition in France, but the lawyers of the Paris Parliament had utterly refused to register the decree. They were Catholics to a man, but they had no idea of letting a secret council of monks darken all France with the horror of so bloody a tribunal as the Inquisition.

The Guises were determined to revive the question, and to crush heresy.

Among the first acts of the new reign was the murder of Du Bourg, one of the most eminent scholars of his time. For the crime of daring to think for himself upon the question of religion, he was hanged, and his body burnt.

In all parts of France lawlessness felt encouraged, and fanaticism began to redden its hands in the blood of its Protestant victims. Houses were sacked, the owners

killed, and their children driven forth to perish of cold or hunger.

Alarmed and indignant, the Protestant chiefs met in conference. Condé advised war; Coligny, peace.

The voice of Coligny prevailed. Then came the attempt of La Renaudie to seize the king and get him out from under the influence of the Guises. This attempt, which
A.D. 1560 failed, through the treachery of one of the conspirators, was called the Conspiracy of Amboise. Condé was probably concerned in it, though it seems that Coligny was not.

Guise took bloody vengeance. Twelve hundred of his enemies were butchered, without trial or formal consideration. They were bunched together, tied back to back, and flung into the Loire. Gentlemen were brought forth to be hanged, after the king had taken dinner, in order that he might regale his eyes and perfect his digestion by viewing the executions.

Francis II. and his fair young queen, in whose future the block, the headsman, and the headsman's axe were waiting, sat composedly upon a balcony of the palace, attended by lords and ladies, and gazed with interest upon the death-struggles of the victims of the warrior Guise, and of his priestly brother the cardinal of Lorraine.

Flushed with success, the Guises now demanded a decree legalizing the Inquisition in France. The chancellor, the illustrious reformer, L'Hôpital, refused to sanction the writ, and the scheme fell. By the Edict of Ramorantin, however, cognizance of the crime of heresy was given to the bishops' courts.

A.D. 1560 There was now a general demand for the assembling of the States General, but the Guises opposed it.

On August 21, the assembly of notables met at Fontainebleau, and was presided over by the king. With him were his queen, the queen-mother, and his brothers.

At this meeting Coligny presented a petition formally demanding, in most respectful terms, liberty of worship for the Protestants. He also urged that the States General be convened.

The Guises opposed both his demands, but the notables decided to convene the States General, and to that meeting the religious question was postponed.

The Guises meant that this States General should not assemble. They planned to strike down the Bourbon princes, and to commence a merciless crusade against the Protestants.

Condé was enticed to court, arrested at once, accused of complicity in the Amboise conspiracy, and condemned to death. The noble chancellor, L'Hôpital, refused to sign the death-warrant, and Condé remained in prison, expecting execution every day.

Antoine of Bourbon, king of Navarre, was, it is said, to be murdered in the king's presence, upon a signal to be given by the king. The signal was not given, however, and the murder did not take place.

Whatever plans the Guises had made were checked by the sudden death of the young king. Not yet seventeen years of age, he was attacked by an abscess of the ear, and grew rapidly worse. Public processions were made A.D. 1560 in Paris for his recovery. His young wife was at his bedside, also Coligny and the Guises. In his dread of death, his pitiable desire to live, the poor boy called upon the Virgin and all the saints to help him, promising them that if they would but save him, he would hunt out the

heretics without pity — sparing no one, not even wife, mother, or brothers, should they be found tainted with the pestilence of independent thought.

Henry II. had left a public debt of 42,480,000 francs, equal to 350,000,000 francs now. The finances were in such disorder, during the brief reign of his son, that the crown refused to pay its most lawful debts, and the Cardinal Lorraine, who had charge of the finances, erected a gallows in front of his door, threatening to hang any one who came to dun the king. Such measures as these, added to the massacres by the Duke of Guise, drove all malcontents into the Protestant party.

CHAPTER XXV

CHARLES THE NINTH

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI became regent of the kingdom, her son Charles IX., next in succession to his brother Francis II., being only ten years old. A.D. 1560

She realized what a storm of hatred the sanguinary course of the Guises was bringing upon the heads of her children, and she perhaps suspected that the Duke of Guise aspired to the crown.

At any rate she put a check upon him, for the present, by appointing Antoine de Bourbon lieutenant-general of the kingdom, liberating Condé, and recalling Montmorency to court. Thus, while taking nothing directly from the Guises, she very effectually brought them to a standstill.

Rarely has a ship of state ridden a wilder sea than the government of Catherine now encountered.

The king was a child, the regent an inexperienced woman, the direct line of the royal house seemed to be failing, and, already, the Bourbons and the Guises had entered upon a fierce rivalry for the succession to the throne.

To this cause of faction, the religious question must be added. The average Catholic regarded the average Protestant as a despicable traitor to God — a man who, for his own soul's salvation, ought to have his error burnt out of him. The Catholics believed sincerely that they them-

selves were committing a heinous sin in permitting Protestantism to exist.

They regarded all compromise with heretics as an abomination in the sight of the Lord. It is a mistake to believe that this feeling was confined to the priests; it was as deep among the people as among the clergy.

With the Protestants, the counter-feeling was just as intense. They hated the Catholic religion with a ravenous hatred. They believed with all their hearts that it ought to be swept off the face of the earth. They bitterly ridiculed Catholic rites and ceremonies, their miracles, exorcisms, prostrations, and processions. They fiercely denounced the worship of images and, whenever they could, made havoc of altars, images, crosses, painted windows, and church decorations generally.

Whenever they could seize upon a Catholic church and convert it to their own use, they did it. Whenever they could insult a Catholic congregation, stop a Catholic procession, or publicly vent their contempt upon the Catholic creed, it was done. The average Protestant not only wanted the liberty of worshipping God according to his own belief, but he wanted also the right to compel other people to conform to his views. Therefore, between the two sects of Christians, there was irreconcilable hatred on principle; and it was intensified by the monstrous falsehoods which each believed about the other. Protestants were told that nuns were harlots, and priests hypocrites, impostors, sensualists, and murderers; whereas Catholics readily accepted the story that it was the custom in Protestant churches, at the night service, for the congregation to follow up the religious exercises by putting out the lights and indulging in promiscuous debauchery.

Combustible materials like these being so abundant, it needed but a spark to light the fires of civil war.

The States General, convoked by Francis II., assembled at Orleans, December 10, 1560, but accomplished nothing. The clerical deputies favoured vigorous measures against the Protestants, the commons favoured religious freedom, the nobles were divided.

The finances were wretchedly disordered. The public debt had reached a sum equal to 350,000,000 francs to-day, while the revenue did not amount to 12,260,000 francs. The nobles would not consent to contribute anything to the treasury, the commons were already taxed to the limit of endurance, and their deputies clamoured for the taxation of church property. The dignitaries of the Church became alarmed and consented to make a free gift of 1,600,000 livres for six years, in addition to the annual tenth, which they had paid under Francis I.

The chancellor, L'Hôpital, an able, honest, patriotic man, had great influence with Catherine de' Medici, and was for some time the conservator of the public peace. Sincerely wishing to avoid internal strife between the two great sects of Christians, he called a conference of the most influential leaders to meet at Poissy in 1561. The cardinal of Lorraine, brother of the Duke of Guise, was chief of the Catholic delegates present; and Calvin, while not attending in person, was represented by Theodore de Bèze, his most distinguished disciple. The attendance of Catholic delegates was large, including several cardinals, forty bishops, and a great number of lesser theologians. The Protestants were represented by eleven ministers only.

Lengthy discussions took place upon articles of faith, with the usual result that nobody's opinion was changed.

The Protestants, however, made some political demands which are worthy of note.

They asked for financial reform, religious toleration, abolition of the sale of offices, and the sale of the property of the Church, then estimated at 120,000,000 livres. The Protestants, having at that time no church property of their own, believed that the wealth of the Church would be wisely used if appropriated for the payment of the public debt. The Protestant Church of our own day would hardly be found advocating doctrines of that kind.

The clergy warded off the danger which lurked in the Calvinist proposition, by making liberal promises, which were not kept, and the conference adjourned.

A.D. 1561 By the celebrated ordinance of Orléans, L'Hôpital re-established canonical elections, forbade the clergy to exact fees for administering the sacraments, compelled them to reside in their benefices, and transferred the administration of justice entirely to men who had some knowledge of law.

Royal letters enjoined it upon Parliament to suspend all religious prosecutions. The chancellor also reëstablished an equilibrium between the income and the outgo of the national revenues.

Up to this time, Catherine was in full accord with L'Hôpital. She even went so far as to write to the Pope, insisting upon the necessity of reforms in the Church. She allowed the chancellor to issue (January, 1562) an edict which permitted Protestant worship in the country districts, while prohibiting it in walled towns, suspended all punishment of heretics, and forbade them from interfering with the Catholic worship.

Such as it was, this was the first act of toleration in France. It was the fruit of a meeting of the deputies chosen by all the parliaments, at the suggestion of the chancellor, for the purpose of trying to find some method of keeping peace between the two religions. In addressing the assembled deputies, as they were about to begin their deliberations, the chancellor had used these noble words: — A.D. 1562

"Inquire whether it may not be possible for a citizen to be a good subject without being a Catholic; and if it be not possible for men, differing in faith, to live in peace with one another. Do not wear yourselves out in seeking to decide which religion is the best. We are not here to settle the faith; we are here to regulate the State."

Had it pleased God to have made this man king of France for some thirty years, what miseries might have been spared the human race!

The concessions granted to the Protestants, while far from satisfactory to that sect, were intensely distasteful to the Catholics. The monks began to accuse the queen of leaning to the new religion; the Jesuits, especially, were active in fomenting discontent and strife. The cardinal of Lorraine and the doctors of the Sorbonne secretly implored the aid of Philip II. of Spain, who remonstrated and threatened the queen-mother. Riots, accompanied with bloodshed, broke out on all sides.

The most sinister agency at work in France, driving her to distraction and civil war, was that of the Jesuits.

This order, founded by Ignatius Loyola, for the purpose of spreading and strengthening the Catholic faith, had been legalized in France two years before.

To fanaticism and unwearied zeal, this secret order

united profoundly subtle and often unscrupulous methods. Armed with the terrible power of the Inquisition, moving stealthily toward their hidden aims, imbued with the belief that evil methods are justifiable weapons in the service of the Church, ready to make use of the assassin, setting spies to work in all great households, listening at the confessional to the heart-beat of the high and the low, the good and the bad, the Jesuits moved behind the scenes in all lands where Catholicism had enemies to meet, and they were the secret causes of many a crime where others struck, many a war where others fought, and many a treaty where human liberties and lives were bartered away.

To the Duke of Guise belongs the evil distinction of beginning the civil wars, through which the soil of France was wet with French blood.

A.D. 1562 Returning from Lorraine in the month of March, 1562, he was passing through the town of Vassy, in Champagne, and stopped there to attend mass. While doing so, he heard singing going on in a neighbouring barn. Inquiring what it meant, he was told that some 600 or 700 Protestants were worshipping there. The duke swelled with rage, pulled his moustache and gnawed it. His followers knew this to be a sure sign of deadly wrath in their master, and no further encouragement did they need.

Off they put, armed soldiers they, to stop the Protestant service. Arrived at the barn, they demanded that the congregation should disperse. The congregation declined to obey, and the Catholic soldiers assailed the unarmed Protestants with their swords, while the Protestants replied with such stones and clods of earth as they could snatch up from the ground.

The duke, hastening up to take a hand in the affray, was hit in the face by a stone, and then followed a massacre in which sixty Protestants were killed and 200 wounded, the victims including women and children as well as men.

This massacre of Vassy was a signal, and other slaughters followed. In districts where the Protestants were in the majority, they assailed and murdered the Catholics, with a fury equal to that from which they had themselves suffered elsewhere.

Neither sect had the slightest respect for the rights of the other. Religious toleration, in its fullest sense, does not exist even now: it did not exist in any sense then. To kill a man who differed from you in religion was justifiable homicide in those days, if the decision were left to *your* sect.

After his exploit at Vassy, the Duke of Guise entered Paris in triumph, Catherine took the young king away to Amboise, and the Protestant chiefs began to organize in self-defence.

The Guise faction, with which the old Constable Montmorency was now coöperating, took possession of the king, however, and carried him back to Paris. Montmorency emphasized his arrival by burning down the only two Protestant churches in the city.

The Protestants still held back from war, and endeavoured by negotiation to obtain peace, security, and freedom of worship. Their efforts failed, and the country drifted into a civil war, which had many truces and treaties and patched-up reconciliations, but which did not finally end until the "Protestant hero," Henry IV., jauntily shook off the new religion and put on the old, and thus became undisputed master of France.

A.D. 1562

There is nothing drearier than a narrative of the details of war, especially civil war, and it is not necessary to dwell upon this chapter in the history of the unhappy land.

It is enough to say that Guise won the first decisive battle — that of Dreux — mainly by the help of the Spanish troops Philip II. had sent him, and took Condé prisoner. It is a curious illustration of the manners of the time that these two deadly enemies — Catholic captor and Protestant captive — cheerfully shared the same bed the night after the battle.

In February, 1563, the Duke of Guise was killed from ambush, by a pistol-shot fired by a fanatical Protestant named Poltrot, who had taken refuge in his camp before Orléans.

A.D. 1563 The assassin was put to death with horrible tortures, glorying in his crime to the last, and crying out amid his torments, "He is gone, the persecutor of the faithful, and he will not come back."

Guise being dead, Montmorency a prisoner, and the Catholics having failed to take Orléans, the queen-mother now favoured peace; and a treaty was accordingly made which allowed Protestant worship in the houses of the nobility and in one town of each province.

A.D. 1565 Instigated by Philip II. of Spain and the Duke of Alva, as well as by the Pope, Catherine gradually encroached upon the privileges granted by the treaty, and war again broke out.

A.D. 1567 There was a battle, before Paris, between the Catholics under Montmorency and the Protestants under Condé, in which Montmorency was killed. The action was of the kind called indecisive, but the Catholics remained in possession of the field. Condé, however, received a reënforce-

ment of 9000 German troops, and the Catholics asked for peace. It was granted upon condition that the former treaty should be carried out. A.D. 1568

But war was in the air, and distrust was universal between the two sects of the followers of Christ. Catherine resolved upon more desperate measures, and to free herself of restraint in this new policy the Chancellor L'Hôpital was displaced.

A plot was made to seize all the Protestant leaders, but they escaped, and civil war again commenced. Catherine declared it by issuing an edict forbidding the exercise of the Protestant religion on pain of death, and by ordering all Protestant ministers to leave the kingdom within two weeks.

The battle of Jarnac was fought March, 1569, Coligny was defeated, and Condé was killed while in the act of surrendering. A.D. 1569 The Protestants were encouraged at this critical moment by the queen of Navarre, Jeanne d' Albret, who joined them with her son, Henry of Béarn, then fifteen years old. Coligny's army was also reënforced by 13,000 Germans. Taking the offensive, he attacked and defeated the Catholic army. This was at Roche Abeille. I mention the name because, so far as I can learn, this was the only fight Coligny ever won.

Soon afterwards he fought again at Montcontour and had his usual luck of being beaten.

Defeats, however, had little effect on Coligny, and he kept his army well in hand, recruiting its strength and getting ready for another battle.

His perseverance and inability to appreciate repeated defeats, discouraged Catherine, and she once more offered peace, which was promptly accepted.

A.D. 1570 By this treaty the Protestants were to enjoy freedom of worship in two cities in each province, and in all places where it was already established; they were to be admitted to all employments; and four cities were to remain in their control, — Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charité.

Trusting to the royal word, Coligny and other Protestant chiefs now returned to court, resumed their functions, and acted confidently upon the belief that the wars were over.

Conciliation was once more the policy of the queen-mother. As a pledge of permanent peace she proposed that her daughter, Margaret de Valois, should marry Henry of Béarn, the head of the Protestant princes. To this marriage there was the obstacle that no Catholic priest would perform the ceremony without a dispensation from the Pope — and the Pope refused to grant one.

Charles IX. heartily favoured the match, and threatened, as he said, to "tuck my sister Margoton under my arm and take her to be married in full meeting-house,"— meaning that he would have the ceremony performed by a Protestant minister. At this firm stand on the part of the king, the papal dispensation was forthcoming, though it is said that Catherine de' Medici forged it.

It seems to me that the earnestness shown by the king and his mother in bringing about this marriage between Margaret and the chief of the heretics, ought to have great weight in determining whether the massacre of St. Bartholomew was not, after all, more of a sudden outbreak than a conspiracy deliberately planned long in advance.

Coligny was still admiral of France, and he again entered into the full performance of his duties. The king treated no one so well; called him "My dear father";

advised with him on all questions, and appeared to be completely under his influence.

This was not pleasing to the Guises nor to the queen-mother, while to the Catholics generally the last treaty was an abomination, and Coligny the object of their intense hatred.

The young Duke of Guise, son of the assassinated duke, believed that the admiral had been privy to his father's murder, and therefore to see himself and his faction superseded in royal favour by this abhorred chief of the Huguenots, was intolerable to him.

Coligny was fired upon and wounded on August 22, 1572, by one Maurevel, a man in the service of the Duke of Guise. The wound was slight, but the commotion which naturally ensued was great. Coligny was urged to quit Paris at once. The Protestant chiefs were in a helpless minority there, and they feared danger. They had A.D. been warned, and in this attempt upon Coligny they saw 1572 the beginning of another civil war.

The young king was at the game of tennis with Guise, when the shot was fired which wounded the admiral. "Am I never to have any peace?" he cried, and broke the racquet with which he was playing. The young duke said nothing.

The king, attended by his mother and his brothers, went to see Coligny and expressed the greatest sorrow and indignation at the crime, swearing vengeance against the criminal.

The admiral still trusted his royal master. In less than forty-eight hours this perjured king had given express sanction to the massacre of every Protestant in his dominions.

The Duke of Alva had long ago suggested to Catherine the propriety of killing off the chiefs of the Protestant cause. The opportunity had at length arrived. The Protestant chiefs, unarmed and unprepared, were at Paris — an intensely Catholic city.

Catherine and the Guises had tried war and had failed. They now resolved to try another plan — wholesale massacre.

The king was by this time of age, and while he possessed quick intelligence and considerable culture, he was of inconstant character, the victim of moods most violent and contradictory. While still breathing threats against Coligny's assailant and the Guises, he was approached by his mother and his brother, who told him that they had connived at the attempt upon the admiral's life and that a prosecution of Guise would involve the whole royal family. They urged him to prevent the exposure, and put a stop to religious strife, once for all, by a general slaughter of the heretics.

Indignantly rejecting this proposal at first, the king sanctioned it soon afterwards, saying, "Kill them all so that none will be left to reproach me."

At two o'clock in the night of August 24, 1572, the bells of the city of Paris rang out the signal for the massacre, and the Protestants awoke to hear the rush of hurrying footsteps, to see the glare of torches, and to face death, sudden and horrible, in every street of the city. It was the morning of Sunday — such a Sunday as the Christian world never saw before. Screams of pain and fear, mingled with yells of joy and gratified hate, filled the air.

Without pity, and without distinction of age or of sex,

the Protestants were butchered. They were shot with pistols and guns, they were gashed with daggers and swords, they were brained with clubs and stones. Even after death, their bodies were mangled, exposed to public ridicule, and treated with every indignity which savage hatred could suggest.

Coligny was one of the first victims. To the small number of men who have ennobled the annals of every nation by heroic devotion to high ideals, Coligny belongs.

By birth he was one of the wealthy and powerful nobles of France.

Every honour to which a subject may attain was within his reach. Born in 1517, he was in 1547 given the command of the French infantry; in 1551 he was made governor of Paris; in 1552 he was appointed admiral of France. In 1555 he became governor of the province of Picardy; in the autumn of that year he was sent as ambassador to conclude with the Emperor Charles V. the Treaty of Vaucelles.

To reap every other reward which royal favour could bestow, Coligny had but to remain a Catholic — worship as the king worshipped, and conform to the religious opinions of the vast majority of the French people.

The Protestants were in a minority; they could count only about one-tenth of the population; they had no organization, wealth, or political power.

Coligny cast his fortunes with this minority, earning thereby a life of toil and a bloody death.

After he had been shot by Guise's hireling, after the king had come to his bedside and sworn vengeance against the assassin, the old man, resisting those who begged him to fly, waited patiently in his sick-room, shrinking from

taking a step which might bring on another civil war, and deaf to those of his partisans who clamoured for leave to revenge him upon Guise.

Meanwhile his enemies were in council at the royal palace, all preparations for indiscriminate murder had been made, the royal sanction had been won by playing upon the fears of a weak, hasty, and violent king, the great bell had sounded the signal, and Coligny awoke to hear ominous knocking on his own door.

Guise was there and his armed men. Coligny and his minister Merlin prayed.

"I have long been prepared to die," said Coligny.

"Save your lives, if you can," he said to his servants; "you cannot save mine. I commend my soul to the mercy of God."

His servants escaped by way of the roof, and the old man was left alone.

The murderers had broken in the door and entered his room.

"Are you the admiral?" asked Besme, a German in Guise's service.

"I am," said Coligny. "Young man, you ought to consider my age and infirmity; but you will not shorten my life much."

Besme pierced him with a boar-spear and the other assassins finished him with their daggers.

"Besme! Besme! Is it done?" asked Guise from the courtyard below.

"It is done, my lord;" and to satisfy my lord about it the dead body is flung out of the window and falls at Guise's feet.

Wiping the blood off the aged face, Guise cries joy-

fully, "I know him: it is he;" and spurning the corpse with his foot, he and his men went forth into the street to join in the general slaughter.

The violent but inconstant king, stricken with a temporary panic and a passing qualm of remorse, sent Guise word to stop the massacre and not to harm Coligny.

"Tell the king it is too late," said the duke.

It was indeed too late. The brave, loyal heart of the patriot, soldier, and statesman was cold.

Priests, with the crucifix in one hand and the sword in the other, ran hither and thither driving on the willing people to the hunt; and in the palace itself, in the very bedroom of the king's sister, there was murder being done.

The king himself is said to have fired upon the wretched Huguenots from a balcony of the royal palace of the Louvre. For several days the hideous carnival of murder went on, the priests inciting the maddened populace with precept and with example.

Orders were sent all over France for similar massacres, and in some cities the orders were obeyed; but to the lasting credit of human nature, be it said, that in several places the Catholic officials flatly refused to honour the king's commands. The massacre was only stopped when it was seen that a reign of anarchy and promiscuous crime was about to set in. And how many were killed? Nobody knows. Dead bodies choked the Seine and the Loire, and had to be taken out by the hundred and buried to prevent pestilence. The streets were slippery with blood; huge piles of bodies were burnt; others were sunk into obscure pits.

No author sets the estimate of the slain lower than

10,000, while some put it as high as 100,000. The truth probably lies between.

Thousands of Catholics were horrified at this massacre, but the king of Spain, Philip II., approved it most heartily, and both he and the Pope sent congratulations to the king of France. Philip actually laughed aloud when he read the despatches announcing the massacre — the only time that he ever laughed in all his gloomy reign. At Rome, the Pope ordered his cannon to fire a salute from the castle of St. Angelo, and Te Deums to be sung in the churches. Civil war again broke out, the Protestants being desperately enraged by the massacre. Rochelle was their stronghold, and the Duke of Anjou, brother of the king, besieged it; but failing to take it after four assaults, he grew tired and negotiated. Peace was made, and once more liberty of conscience was solemnly promised the Protestants.

Charles IX. was keenly mortified by this failure. It seemed to him that the butchery he had sanctioned had not succeeded in suppressing heresy, and he suffered remorse. He complained that St. Bartholomew haunted him, with its visions of murder, its cries of terror, its groans of the dying, its white faces of the dead. A frightful disease wore him away: he had convulsions and furious delirium; the blood oozed from the pores of his skin, from his nose and his ears. Strange to say his old nurse was a Huguenot, and he trusted her. She was his only attendant as he breathed his last at twenty-four years of age, on the 30th of May, 1574.

A.D. 1574

Charles IX. was not perhaps an especially bad man. He was violent but irresolute, changing from one course to another as the pressure upon him varied.

He wrote poetry and was a friend of poets. His relations with Ronsard, a famous lyric poet of that day, were almost intimate, and entirely cordial. He was passionately fond of hunting, and wrote a treatise on the subject. He granted letters-patent for the first literary society founded in France, and not only loved to meet with literary men and artists, but also sang in the churches, and himself composed songs.

Another of his tastes was for blacksmith's work, and he had a forge set up for himself in the palace where he made horseshoes, nails, and other things of like kind with all the zeal of one who was not obliged to toil for his living. He was temperate in eating and drinking, taking no wine at all.

This unfortunate monarch was the slave of his surroundings, of the fierce passions which shook his throne, of the intense rivalries which pulled him first in one direction and then in another. Had not the people been ready to cut one another's throats about religious differences, the king's orders, wrung from him by his mother, brother, and the Guise faction, would have been ignored. Mechanics, tradesmen, day-labourers, quiet citizens, and peaceful property-holders do not pull out knives and begin slashing their neighbours simply because a king tells them to do it. Therefore the responsibility for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew rests mainly upon the people themselves, and upon the teachers who taught them that a man who believed he had a right to worship God according to his own convictions was worse than a murderer, and should be killed like a dog wherever found.

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As an example of the spirit of the times, the following account of the attempt by Coligny to found a Protestant colony in Florida may be told before closing this gloomy chapter wherein he has played such a conspicuous part.

Coligny had the far-reaching views of a statesman. He wished to extend French influence, and to give to Protestantism secure outlets by founding colonies in the New World.

One of these colonies he planted in Florida.

King Philip II. of Spain determined to destroy it. Selecting Menendez as leader, he sent against the Huguenot colony a force of 2600 men. They landed some distance from the French fort, and advanced upon it through the swamps. The Spaniards were badly led, and suffered great privations and hardships on the march, and could hardly be kept from giving up the expedition in despair.

The French, in the meanwhile, had acted with bad judgment. Knowing that they were to be attacked, they divided their forces. Ribaut, their leader, sailed away with the flower of the troops to attack the Spanish ships. A storm arose, wrecked the fleet, and the men barely escaped with their lives, having lost guns, ammunition, provisions, and clothing.

The garrison they had left at the fort consisted of 150 soldiers, of whom forty were sick.

The Spaniards came upon this little band and surprised it — the sentinels having left their posts of duty at precisely the wrong time. The garrison had barely time to grasp swords, when they were overpowered and slain. Twenty escaped to the woods, and fifteen women and children were spared.

The men under Ribaut were floundering around in swamps, barely able to keep alive, and striving to reach the fort, which they did not know had been captured.

When within five miles of the fort, Ribaut's scouts reported that the Spanish flag was flying over it.

There was nothing for the unarmed Frenchmen to do but to struggle back through the cypress swamps, hoping to reach a friendly coast and a way home to France.

Ignorant of the country, they stumbled right into the new Spanish settlement.

Menendez saw them approach. He had only forty men with him. A river ran between him and the French. A parley ensued. Menendez told the French they could either take to the woods where they were certain to starve, or they could surrender at discretion. The French surrendered. They were brought across the river in small squads, and their hands tied behind their backs.

When asked if they were Catholics, eight answered in the affirmative, and they were put to one side. The rest were all Protestants. Menendez made a line on the ground with his cane. The Protestants were marched up to the line, one after another, and as they reached it, were stabbed to death.

Next day Ribaut came up with the main body of the French. Again there was parleying. This time the Spaniards swore on the cross — which was duly kissed — that the lives of the French would be spared if they surrendered.

Some of the French suspected treachery and escaped to the woods. The remainder surrendered, Ribaut included.

The Spaniards tied them back to back, four together, and they were murdered where they stood. Four hun-

dred prisoners were thus butchered, Menendez being present, and a priest, Mendoza, at hand to encourage, exhort, and applaud the assassins.

The corpses were burnt, and on the trees near by Menendez inscribed: —

"Slaughtered, not as Frenchmen, but as Lutherans."

Tidings crossed the seas slowly in those days, and it was long before Europe knew the story of the tragedy in Florida. When it was known, there was joy and exultation among the Catholics; there was grief and wrath among the Protestants.

The French government would take no notice of the crime. Catherine and her sons were too closely in league with Philip II. and the Pope.

It was left to a private citizen to take revenge for this national grievance.

Dominique de Gourgues was a man of noble birth and a soldier. He had held against the Spaniards, in Italy, a fort garrisoned by thirty men and attacked by a whole corps. The fort having been taken, the Spaniards butchered the garrison and sent its commander to the galleys. This degrading punishment, and the hard life in the galleys, filled De Gourgues with hatred of the Spaniards. His ship was captured by the Turks, and his Spanish masters were chained to the oars by his side.

The vessel was captured from the Turks by the French, and De Gourgues regained his freedom.

Nine years he spent in voyaging to Brazil, Africa, and the West Indies, killing Spaniards at every opportunity.

When he learned the story of the Florida tragedy, he set himself to avenge it. He was not rich, but he sold

what he had, borrowed more from his brother, equipped three little ships with 180 soldiers and set sail for Florida.

Landing fifteen leagues north of the Spanish fort, he was largely reënforced by the Indians, whose hatred the Spaniards had provoked.

The Spaniards were taken by surprise, just as they had previously surprised the French. Entirely unsuspicious, the garrison was at dinner. Suddenly there was a musket shot, and the cry, "The French, the French!" The Spaniards lost their heads completely, and De Gourgues captured first the outworks and then the fort (Caroline) itself.

Out of the Spanish force of 300, only sixty survived the assault. These prisoners De Gourgues hanged on the spot, inscribing over them the words: —

"I do this, not to Spaniards, but to traitors, thieves, and murderers."

Then he destroyed the fort, and sailed away to France, where the Protestants received him with great enthusiasm at Rochelle.

Philip II. demanded his arrest and surrender, and the French government meanly consented. Coligny, however, interposed, and the government, for very shame, dared not obey Spain.

After Coligny's death, De Gourgues found a protector in Montluc — a zealous Catholic, but a true Frenchman also. At Montluc's death (1577), this heroic champion of France had to seek asylum in England, where he died in 1583.

CHAPTER XXVI

HENRY THE THIRD

IN the neighbourhood of Cracow, Poland, in June, 1574, there was to be seen something which *was* new under the sun.

A king of Poland was running away from his job, A.D. 1574 and his faithful subjects were out armed with sticks, scythe-blades, and other rude persuasives, trying to catch him.

The third son of Henry II. had been elected king of Poland May 9, 1573, had arrived to take his seat January, 1574, had been solemnly and ceremoniously consecrated and crowned at Cracow on the 24th of February following.

About the middle of June news reached him that his brother Charles had died, childless, at Paris. This made him heir to the crown of France, and he was advised to set out at once to claim the more splendid dignity. His obvious duty was to resign the Polish crown in due form, with thanks for the honour done him. But Henry was afraid that the Poles, being an outlandish people, and a rude, might hold him to his contract, and not allow him to leave them to face life kingless. Therefore he decided to slip away. Having had horses secretly stationed half a league out of town, he walked that distance, attended by a few of his friends, as if taking an airing. On reach-

ing the horses, he mounted in haste, galloped away from his faithful Poles, rode all night, and never drew rein till he reached the Austrian frontier.

The flight of the king created a great uproar in Cracow. The Poles felt that they must catch their king. In hot haste, pell-mell, helter-skelter, they tumbled out into the highway, armed with what weapons they could find, and took up the pursuit of the royal runaway.

They did not overtake him; Poland was left to hunt another costly figurehead, while Henry galloped on through the summer night: galloped on to plunge himself into the gloom and distraction of fifteen years of the maddest, foulest, weakest rule king ever knew; on to the black day when he was to murder Guise; and on to that last day of all when Clément, the monk, was to go to meet him with the knife in his murderous hand.

As a souvenir of his brief sojourn in Poland, the fugitive king brought away the crown jewels of the kingdom he had deserted.

In Vienna, Venice, and the Italian cities along the road to France, Henry spent two months in dissipation of every kind; and when he finally entered Paris, he was attended by such a mob of loose women, profligate youth, donkeys, parrots, monkeys, and lap-dogs, that the grotesque gathering inspired general disgust.

Henry III. was not entirely wanting in ability or courage, but he was hopelessly weak, vacillating, and unmanly. Not capable of great things at his best, he was, at his worst, a mere fribble, given over to feminine pursuits, childish amusements, and scandalous attachments. At one moment he edified the orthodox by putting on penitential garb and walking barefooted in some religious

procession; at another he masqueraded through the streets as a beggar, asking alms from door to door, accompanied by his royal wife, by a group of boon companions of both sexes, and by a train of pet animals. On another occasion he appeared at a splendid banquet in the palace, dressed as a courtesan, and acting the character, although his mother was present with the court.

The same man, controlled by another and far different mood, could plan the death of the all-powerful Guise, could sweep aside that uncrowned monarch of France, and, by joining forces with Henry of Navarre, could lay securely the foundations of future peace.

These were troubled times. The fountains of the great deep of social order were broken up. Not only did feudalism raise its head again, but the communes reasserted their prerogatives. Private war raged on all sides. Duels and assassinations were of daily occurrence. War was smouldering between Catholic and Huguenot, and woe to the one which fell into the hands of the other. Paris was ruled by the commune, a municipal organization administered by the famous Committee of Sixteen. So disordered were the times that this municipal committee fell upon the Parliament of Paris and threw some forty members into prison, the Parliament being for the king, while the Committee was for Guise.

Catherine de' Medici is a unique figure in this confused and ever shifting drama. She is accused of all crimes; is thought to be in all plots; is trusted in turn by all parties, only to be by all eventually denounced. Pretending to be fond of Henry of Navarre, she married her daughter to him; yet when Henry's mother sud-

denly died, he openly accused Catherine of poisoning her. Negotiating with Guise up to the very day of his death, she was first his enemy, then his friend. She plotted with him Coligny's murder and the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; she saved his life just before the "Day of the Barricades"; she was his secret ally against her own son, and, at the end, she sanctioned his assassination.

She used L'Hôpital and the *Politicians*, as the moderate party of Catholics and Huguenots were called, so long as it was possible to use them, then sacrificed them to the Guises, and went over to the extremists of the League.

Her own sons were not safe from her duplicity. It seems certain that she purposely encouraged them in idleness and profligacy in order to gather power from their feebleness, and she was surrounded by a bevy of seductive young women who served as her decoys.

In her court, at her banquets, before her very eyes, were enacted scenes of scandalous immorality, and the atmosphere in which she moved reeked of intrigue, of vice, and of crime.

If the historian were required to name a time in French history in which all moral, social, and political ties were loosened, and in which religion became a mere cover for ambition and an excuse for murder, rapine, and rebellion, he would probably select the reign of Henry III., the last of the Valois.

From the pulpit priests thundered against heresy, and against a king who tolerated it, and violently preached the doctrine that tyrannicide was an act of heroism. The churches became the storm-centres of sedition. Every political measure was there discussed, and adopted or condemned.

Each noble had his band of cut-throats ready to do his bidding if a troublesome foe were in the way. The law of the land was powerless to reach the great; they were absolutely above the jurisdiction of courts.

The Pope plotted against Henry III. and encouraged his subjects to treason; Philip II. hired an assassin to kill William the Silent, and publicly rewarded the murderer. Elizabeth of England, after some years of hesitation, deliberately put to death Mary of Scotland, her prisoner; Margaret of Valois, wife of Henry of Navarre, wishing an enemy killed, repaid the assassin by admitting him to her royal favours; the Duke de Villiquier stabbed his wife for repulsing the advances of the king, who thereupon appointed him governor of Paris.

Montluc, a Catholic commander, boasted that his march could be followed by the dead Huguenots hanging on the trees; while Briquemont, the Huguenot commander, wore with boastful pride a necklace of priests' ears.

One of the first acts of Henry III. was to put to death the constable Montgomery, who had been taken prisoner in the last civil war. He was one of the most illustrious Protestant chiefs, and his execution created intense anger among them.

It was Montgomery who had accidentally killed Henry II., and no doubt the fate which now overtook him was partly due to that fact.

There was war even in the palace. The king distrusted his only brother, the Duke of Alençon, and sought to have him assassinated.

The duke escaped from the palace, hastened to the south, and joined the confederated Huguenots and malcontents.

Armies began to move, and the young Duke of Guise distinguished himself by the victory of Dormans, where he put to flight a force of German Lutherans who were coming to reënforce the Huguenots.

In this action, Guise was shot by a trooper he was pursuing, and lost his left ear and part of the cheek. Hence his nickname of Le Balafré, or The Scarred. From this time forward he was the hero of the Catholics.

The Duke of Alençon marched toward Paris at the head of an army, upon which Catherine de' Medici gathered up some of her most winning damsels, and paid her son a visit. Her own arts of persuasion were so well seconded by the obliging ladies of her train that the ardour of warfare gently oozed out of the duke, and he sank languidly into negotiation and peace. His mother agreed to triple his possessions, and he quitted the ranks of the Reformers. A.D. 1576

By this treaty (1576), the Huguenots obtained permission to worship according to their religion throughout the kingdom, except in Paris, and the privilege of holding a free and general council. Several places of refuge were ceded to them, and mixed tribunals, half-Catholic and half-Huguenot, were established.

Henry of Navarre had eluded the vigilance of Catherine, had torn himself away from the seductions of her ladies, and had escaped from the court, where he had been detained ever since St. Bartholomew's Day.

In a letter, which he wrote to a friend a short time before his flight, he said: —

"The court is the strangest place you ever saw. We are almost ready to cut one another's throats. We wear daggers, shirts of mail, and very often a whole cuirass

under our cape. I am only waiting for a chance to fight; for they tell me they will kill me, and I want to be beforehand."

If this spirit of rancorous hatred was the legacy of the St. Bartholomew in the court circles, we can imagine what it was among the people themselves.

Cæsar himself would have needed all his sagacity, all his courage, and all his clemency in dealing with a situation so perilous.

By the terms of the treaty of 1576, just mentioned, Henry of Navarre obtained Guienne, while Condé was given Picardy.

The Huguenots were now led by men who put self-interest first and religion second. It was no longer a mere abstract principle of right for which the leaders were willing to perish rather than compromise.

Protestantism in France had fallen into the hands of practical politicians; for the present there was a truce between the sects, though it was an armed one. The opposing forces were not disbanded. The feeling of insecurity was general, and each party stood with its hand on its sword.

The Catholics were intensely dissatisfied with the concessions granted to the Huguenots. They regarded it as a betrayal of their cause by the king and, incited by the Jesuits, Catholic leagues began to be formed for the purpose of preserving the supremacy of the true faith.

Henry of Guise, the bold and skilful son of the most popular man in France, who had lost his life in the Catholic cause, as has been already told, was himself the hero of the nation at this critical juncture. He

was rich and spent his money like a prince; he was brave and had all the dash of a knightly cavalier; he was ambitious and he moved toward a great opportunity with consummate address and tireless zeal.

He realized at a glance the tremendous potency of the secret order which had begun to spring up among the Catholics. He developed it into a system, gave it a constitution, and directed its energies to a definite purpose. That purpose was to depose Henry III. as an incapable debauchee, set aside his brother, now called the Duke of Anjou, because he had made friends with the Huguenots, and put Guise himself on the vacant throne; Henry of Navarre, next of kin to the Valois, being a Huguenot, and therefore more hateful to the Catholics than Henry III. This secret league had the approval of the Pope, and Philip II. promised to aid it with men and money.

The States General assembled at Blois, December, 1576, A.D. 1576 and was composed of deputies devoted to Guise. Only one Protestant member had been elected. The assembly demanded that resolutions passed by them should have the force of laws, and that thirty-six of their members, chosen by them, should assist the king in governing the country. Henry parried this blow by espousing the cause of the league, declaring himself its chief, and proclaiming his purpose to suppress heresy.

Another outbreak of civil war followed; but it was A.D. 1577 not marked by any events of special importance, and peace was again made in 1577. The Huguenots secured fairly good terms, and there was more or less tranquillity in the troubled State for two or three years.

Taxes were increased from time to time, and the money

A.D. 1580 wasted in court festivities. A seventh civil war broke out in 1580, raged for a short time, and died down as suddenly as it had begun. Nobody knows precisely what started it or stopped it.

A.D. 1581 and 1583 In 1581, the Duke of Anjou led an expedition into the Netherlands to aid the Flemings in their revolt against Philip II. of Spain. The duke met with some success at first, and was formally proclaimed Duke of Brabant and Count of Flanders. He ruined everything, however, by embroiling himself in civil strife with the Flemings themselves, was guilty of a bloody massacre of citizens in Amsterdam, and the indignant country rose against him and drove him out. He retired to his own domains and there died, it is said, of rage and chagrin (1584).

The death of Anjou left Henry III. the sole representative of the House of Valois, and the question of the succession became more important than ever. It was believed that Henry III. was incapable of begetting children; Henry of Navarre, the despised Huguenot, was next heir to the throne.

Once more the League revived, its purpose being to put down the Huguenots, exclude Navarre from the throne, and elevate Guise instead.

Philip II. of Spain united himself with Guise by formal treaty, and the Pope gave him complete liberty of action. To cloak the real purpose of Guise, it was agreed to use the old Cardinal Bourbon, next heir after Navarre, as the candidate of the League for the crown.

The priests received their instructions, and began to stir up the Catholic masses. The pulpits resounded with appeals to passion. The smouldering embers of religious hate were fanned into flame. Henry of Navarre was

denounced, and fearful pictures drawn of the tortures Catholics would undergo if a heretic came into power. The people were mad with excitement and clamoured for war. To the universal noise Rome added her thunders; the Pope excommunicated Henry of Navarre, and declared him incapable of inheriting the crown.

Henry III. bent before the storm and made a complete surrender to the League, and thus the sceptre passed to Guise. From that time the duke was the master. Henry prohibited the Protestant worship throughout France, and agreed to deliver up certain towns to the duke and to pay his foreign troops. A.D. 1585

The Huguenots flew to arms, and the eighth civil war ensued. A.D. 1586

The Protestants had able leaders, the first of whom was Henry of Navarre. After him came the Princes of Condé and Conti, the Dukes of La Rochefoucauld and Rohan, the brothers Laval, the brave old La Noue, besides La Trémouille, Roquelaure, and Biron. Rosny — afterwards Duke of Sully — sold the timber on his estates and brought the money to the service of the needy Navarre.

The king sent an army against the Huguenots; Henry of Navarre met this force at Coutras (1587), and in two hours destroyed it. A.D. 1587

He lost the fruits of the victory, however, by galloping off to lay the standards he had taken at the feet of his mistress, the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées, Countess of Grammont.

Before he could get back to business, Guise had intercepted the German auxiliaries, which Henry should have joined, had beaten them at Vimory and again at Auneau

(1587). Navarre's own army disbanded because he could not pay the troops.

The result of the campaign was that Guise was more powerful than ever. As Henry III. reëntered Paris, he was met by acclamations which plainly told him of the contempt in which he was held; and in a few days the Sorbonne decided that "the government could be taken out of the hands of kings found incapable of ruling."

Henry became alarmed and sent written orders to Guise not to enter Paris. For want of ready money to pay a courier, this letter was sent to Guise by mail, and he denied receiving it. He entered Paris in defiance of the king, and boldly presented himself unattended at the palace, having first called upon Catherine de' Medici, who accompanied him to the royal presence.

Henry's wrath was great. "I told you not to come here," he said sternly to the duke.

In answer, Guise said that he had come to reply in person to the attacks of his enemies who had slandered him to the king.

Henry was urged to kill his foe then and there, and one of his followers asked leave to do it, but Catherine objected, and the king let the opportunity pass. When Guise came to the palace again he had his friends around him.

Bearded in this manner, the furious king ordered into Paris the Swiss mercenaries and the French guards upon whom he thought he could rely.

Paris was devoted to the duke, and it now rose in revolt. Chains were stretched across the streets, and barricades arose behind them.

For two days the king and his rebellious duke fortified

themselves in their respective palaces, each expecting the other to attack.

The Swiss were about to be massacred by the frenzied mob, when Guise issued from his palace, clad in a white doublet, carrying only a small stick in his hand, and calmed the storm as if by magic.

Rescuing the Swiss, he sent them back to the king with insulting scorn, and for two hours he stood in the streets, where Catherine de' Medici had caused herself to be carried in a litter, discussing with the queen-mother terms of accommodation with the king. While this debate was in progress, Henry III. had fled from his palace and from Paris. He took up his residence at Blois, threatening to return to Paris through a breach in the walls.

Guise was now in a critical position. The king was no longer in his power. He was distinctly in rebellion, for the first time; and while Paris was his, and also the great body of the League, still his position was radically different and radically weaker than it had been.

Royalty yet retained a certain divinity in the eyes of the nation, and to make war upon their king was a huge novelty to the French people. Besides, Guise had at last thrown aside the mask, and was seen as an aspirant to the throne, which further lessened the strength of his position.

The duke realized all this, and began to negotiate. To the amazement of all, he obtained terms which the king had refused on the "Day of the Barricades."

Henry swore to exterminate the heretics, declared that a non-Catholic could not inherit the crown, appointed Guise lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and convoked the States General at Blois. A.D. 1588

The designs of Guise were now boldly proclaimed. Prominent leaguers talked of shutting Henry up in a cloister and making Guise constable of the kingdom. The duke's sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, wore at her girdle a pair of golden scissors, destined, as she said, to cut the hair and shear the monkish crown of the deposed Henry.

These rash speeches were reported to the king, and they drove him, at last, to a desperate resolution — to kill his relentless enemy, even if he had to do the deed himself.

But in token of complete reconciliation with the duke, he partook of the holy sacrament with him, and in doing so vowed friendship for the future, and forgetfulness of the past.

An assassin was needed, and Henry turned to the forty-five gentlemen of his guard. First, he sounded its chief, the brave Crillon, who refused. Crillon offered to challenge Guise, and kill him in fair fight if he could; but assassinate him, never!

The baffled monarch turned to others, and found them more compliant. Lognac offered to take charge of the matter, and the king trusted it to him.

Vague rumours of the plot against the duke got abroad, and he was warned nine different times.

"They dare not," was his reply, and he took no precautions.

The king himself bought the daggers for the deed, gave them with his own hands to the assassins, and stationed them at their places.

Guise was to attend a meeting of the council, in the royal chamber, at six o'clock on the morning of December

23, 1588. The murderers were placed upon the stair, in the anteroom, and in the king's chamber. As the duke entered, the door was closed behind him, and he was conducted to the anteroom. In the act of stooping to lift the tapestry which hung before the door, he was stabbed. Lognac and the guards struck him down, and he died at the foot of the king's bed, having dragged his murderers across the room. A.D. 1588

Henry gazed long and fixedly upon the body, remarked upon its surprising length, and kicked it — as the dead man had kicked Coligny's dead body, years before.

"Madam, I am again king," said Henry to his mother, who was lying upon her deathbed.

"It is well cut out, my son," she responded; "but there's the sewing yet to be done."

The cardinal of Lorraine, brother of Guise, was killed the next day. The men who had been quite ready to murder the duke, hung back stubbornly at the idea of slaying a cardinal. It required great effort on the part of the king, seconded by extra pay, before he could get the cardinal despatched.

Guise's blood is said still to mark the floor of the old palace of Blois, and the curious traveller lingers in the rooms, fascinated by the details of one of the darkest crimes in history.

Henry III. was a devout mortal; he had mass celebrated while the murder was being done, and he directed that prayer should be offered, beseeching God to prosper him in his undertaking.

Great was the fury of the Catholics when the tidings flew abroad that the Balafré, the hero of the League, had been foully slain.

The churches resounded with curses, with fierce demands for vengeance. The Sorbonne fulminated, decreeing that the French people were freed from their oath of allegiance. Rome fulminated, decreeing that Henry was forever cast out and damned to all eternity.

Processions thronged the streets, carrying torches to the churches, and praying frantically that the accursed race of Valois might be extinguished as those torches were extinguished, then and there. Paris was in open revolt, and so were many of the chief cities of the kingdom. In fact, Henry was almost a king without a throne.

Catherine de' Medici was now dead, and the last of the Valois turned to Henry of Navarre. An interview
A.D. 1589 took place between the two kings at Plessis-les-Tours, the old fortress of Louis XI. Cordial relations were at once established between them, and Henry of Navarre went vigorously to work to subdue the rebellion. In two months he was master of the country between the Loire and the Seine. His forces constantly increased, and on the evening of July 30, 1589, the two kings, with 40,000 men, appeared before Paris. The great city was in consternation; but in the heart of the clergy there was concentrated passion and determination. The Duchess of Montpensier left nothing undone to awaken the frenzy of the people, and to inspire some fanatic to save the true religion by assassinating the recreant king.

The city was to be stormed on the 2d of August. On the morning of August 1st, a young friar from the Dominican convent, Jacques Clément, came out from Paris and took the road to the king's quarters. Asking a private interview with the king, upon the ground that he had important secrets to tell, and being granted it, he stabbed Henry in the stomach, fatally.

"The wicked monk has killed me," cried the king, drawing the knife from the wound, and striking the murderer in the face with it.

The guards came running up and slew the monk who had avenged Guise.

Henry of Navarre hastened to the king, who urged him to turn Catholic, and thus assure his peaceful accession.

This advice Henry rejected at the time, but finally adopted after years of civil war.

The king died the same night, and thus the royal race of Valois became extinct.

To this wretched end had come the gallop from Cracow; and to this comprehensive failure had come all the subtleties, poisonings, treacheries, and massacres of Catherine de' Medici.

Fanaticism and gratified hatred never gave themselves over to such an outburst of fierce exultation as they did when news reached Paris that Clément had killed the king. Bells were rung and bonfires lighted; the Duchess of Montpensier hugged the man who brought her the information, and in a transport of joy rode through the streets with her mother, crying "Good news," and encouraging the tumultuous rejoicings of the people. Priests from their pulpit proclaimed the martyrdom of Clément and called him a saint; his portrait was laid upon the altars, and the people knelt before it. His mother, a poor villager, was taken into the palace of the Duchess of Montpensier, and great crowds flocked to see her and pay her honour. The Sixteen apostrophized the assassin, exclaiming, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee," while at Rome the rejoicings among the faithful were equally pronounced.

CHAPTER XXVII

HENRY THE FOURTH

A.D. 1589

HENRY of Navarre was now in the prime of life, thoroughly seasoned in mind and body for the great task which lay before him.

To win a crown which the Pope said he should not have, which Philip of Spain said he should not have, and which a great majority of the French people said he should not have — this was his task.

The first indications of his existence had been recognized by his mother amid the cannons and the trumpets of a camp in Picardy, and she, the heroic Jeanne d'Albret, had sung a gay Béarnese song as she went through the pangs of his birth. "Thus," said his grandfather, "thou shalt not bring us a morose and sulky child." The lips of the infant were brushed with a clove of garlic and moistened with a drop of Gascon wine. "Thus," said the grandfather, "shall the boy be both merry and bold."

This same grandfather allowed him to run about barefooted and bareheaded, like a peasant, so that he became hardy, active, and strong. He was fed on black bread, beef, and garlic, and taught to shoot, to ride, and to tell the truth. His mother was a Huguenot and, after her husband's death, proclaimed her faith, and taught it to her son; but Henry was never a man of books, and the religious element was altogether wanting in his character.

At the age of fifteen his mother carried him to the Huguenot camp at Rochelle, and the Reformers made him their chief. This nominal recognition he bore worthily in the battles which followed; and from the real leaders, Coligny, Condé, and Nassau, he received his first practical lessons in the art of war.

After the peace, he and his mother went to court, and the death of his mother soon followed. Then came his own marriage with the French king's sister, Margaret of Valois. On the day of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew the maniac king shouted to him, "The mass or death," and Henry became for the time a nominal Catholic.

For four years he was held at court, free in all things except in the liberty to leave. If he ever had any morals, he now lost them. The gayest rake in Paris was not more dissolute than he. During these four years he sounded the depths of this most depraved of courts. He learned all of its wiles, its intrigues, its hypocrisies, its want of scruple, of honesty, of shame. At one time he is asked by the queen-mother to attempt the life of her son; at another the king, Henry III., implores him to assassinate his brother; at one time he is found with Henry III. fighting Huguenots; at another he is with the king's brother and the Huguenots, fighting the king.

When at length he made his escape, his education in practical politics had been completed.

He was shiftier than the shiftiest, nimbler than the nimblest, trickier than the trickiest, and as coldly, craftily, relentlessly bent upon seizing the crown as Guise himself.

In the four quiet years which followed the peace of Fleix, Henry lived at Pau in his kingdom of Navarre.

In one respect, at least, his court was modelled on that of Paris: Henry had his seraglio, and his wife had her lovers. Margaret detested Henry, and Henry disliked Margaret — while they both were devoted to licentious pleasures.

Henry, however, was politically important, as the chief of the Huguenots. Coligny, Condé, Montgomery, and many others of the old leaders being dead, Henry III., badgered by the Guises, and worried by his brother and his mother, sought an alliance with Navarre. He besought Henry to come to Paris and join the Catholic Church, thus strengthening the king's position against Guise, and also his own.

The chief of Navarre's council, De Ségur, thought the suggestion wise, and so advised his master.

D'Aubigné, however, took Ségur aside, and proposed to pitch him out of the window if he did not change his mind. This window overhung a deep chasm, and Ségur did not like the looks of it at all, nor did he grow bolder when he glanced round and saw, close at hand, certain Huguenot soldiers standing silent and grim, with hats drawn down upon their brows, and wearing a severe expression. He yielded, and agreed to advise Navarre very differently.

The overtures of Henry III. were, consequently, rejected — a very fatal mistake, as it seems to this writer.

About the same time that the king of France was urging upon Henry of Navarre the identical policy he was fain to adopt after so many years of strife and carnage, Philip II. of Spain offered him a bribe of 400,000 crowns in hand, and a yearly payment of 12,000 more if he would make war upon Henry III.

Philip already had the Duke of Guise in his pay; had

Henry of Navarre yielded also, France would have become a dependency of Spain.

The crafty Navarre saw the snare and avoided it: he meant to win France for himself, not for Philip.

Leader of the Huguenots as he was, Henry of Navarre kept the door open behind him always; and he never ceased to say to the Catholics: "If I am wrong, instruct me."

Thus, while holding to the Protestants, he kept many moderate Catholics true to him, in the belief that he would finally return to the bosom of Mother Church.

The murder of Guise left Henry III. so encircled by relentless foes that an alliance with Navarre became a necessity, and that prince, whose fortunes were at a low ebb, at once saw his opportunity and rose to the crisis.

The murder of Henry III. brought him to the throne; but, in the language of Catherine de' Medici, "there was sewing to be done."

The Huguenots at once saluted Navarre as King of France, — Henry IV., — but they were only 5000 in an army of 40,000. In the Catholic camp the fiercest passions raged.

To serve with Navarre, the ally of Henry III., was one thing; to serve under Navarre, as king of France, was quite another. "Better die than endure a Huguenot king," cried the majority of the Catholic leaders. A strong minority boldly declared for him. "Sir," said De Givry, "you are the king of the brave; only the cowards will desert you."

Henry's position was most difficult. If he yielded too much to the discontented Catholics, he would drive away the Huguenots; if he yielded nothing, the discontented

Catholics would go over to the Guise faction, now led by the Duke of Mayenne, and put Henry in a hopeless minority.

The crafty monarch promised the Huguenots freedom of worship in one town in each district; to the Catholics he promised full protection until a general council of the State could be called together to settle the religious question.

This compromise was accepted by many of the Catholic nobles, Henry having dealt with them most liberally in the matter of bribes, pensions, and appointments. A stubborn minority, led by the Duke of Epernon, resisted all overtures, and left the camp, followed by 7000 Catholic soldiers.

Extreme Huguenots were also disgusted. They bitterly resented what they considered the betrayal of their cause. La Trémouille led the defection, and nine battalions of Protestants withdrew, unwilling "to serve under a king who protected idolatry."

Henry IV. was left with half his army, composed of Swiss mercenaries, personal friends, moderate Catholics, and reasonable Huguenots.

The Guise faction, back of which was Philip II. of Spain, the Pope, and the Holy League, put at its head the Duke of Mayenne, brother of the murdered Guise. They pretended to be striving to secure the crown for the old Cardinal Bourbon, and they styled him Charles X.

The wretched land was now the prey of faction. Lawless bands passed to and fro, pillaging and oppressing. Rival camps dotted each province. City was arrayed against city, town against town. Brothers were found fighting against brothers, and fathers against their own sons.

Philip's gold supplied the sinews of war to Mayenne and the League, it being his ambition to secure the throne for his daughter Isabella. The nobles were willing to take all his money and to keep up the reign of disorder, their purpose being to subdivide the kingdom into dukedoms and principalities for themselves, and to reëstablish the feudal system.

Henry IV. was almost a wanderer in his own kingdom. He had no money; his little army was constantly fluctuating, — supporters coming and supporters leaving, and so dismal was the outlook that he was in the very act of abandoning the field to his foes, and retiring to the south. D'Aubigné is credited with the courageous remonstrance which kept Henry firm.

Compelled to give up, for the present, all hope of subduing Paris, the king marched into Normandy. He made an attempt to take Rouen, which failed; but the important seaport town of Dieppe opened her gates, and received him with acclamations. A.D. 1589

Queen Elizabeth, because she so dearly detested Philip II. and wanted to check the growth of his power, came to Henry's relief at this critical moment. She sent him 12,000 English troops, and a large supply of provisions, clothing, money, and ammunition.

The Duke of Mayenne, commanding the forces of the League, advanced against the king with a large army, and endeavoured to dislodge him from his intrenchment before Dieppe. Henry had the advantage in several skirmishes, and Mayenne did not venture a general assault. Henry having received heavy reënforcements led by the Huguenot commanders, La Noue, Longueville, and D'Aumont, the Duke of Mayenne drew off his army, and marched away

to effect a junction with a Spanish force which Philip II. had ordered up from the Netherlands.

Henry's forces rapidly increased, in consequence of these early successes, and with an army of 25,000 he moved rapidly on Paris. Under cover of a thick fog, the outskirts of the city were taken, the troops crying, "St. Bartholomew," as they entered.

A.D. 1589 Hearing that Mayenne was approaching with superior forces, the king fell back into Normandy, of which he made himself master.

If Henry's difficulties were great, those of the League were greater. On Henry's side there was at least a leader who knew what he wanted, and whose energies could be directed with unity of purpose.

Among the Leaguers there was no union of intent: conflicting purposes paralyzed their movements and divided their strength.

The Dukes of Lorraine and Savoy meant to dismember the kingdom. Other dukes hungered for principalities. Mayenne wanted indefinite war, to prolong his power as lieutenant-general of the kingdom, and to afford him time to absorb unlimited quantities of Philip's money.

The Sixteen at Paris dreamed of doing away with kings, potentates, and powers, altogether; they wanted, or supposed they did, a sort of theocratic republic.

Philip II. of Spain was using, or seeking to use, all these various and conflicting factions in the interest of his own ambition. He claimed the throne for his daughter, and the protectorship of the kingdom for himself.

But even this design was held in subordination to his main purpose, which was to keep the crown of France on the head of a Catholic. To effect this end, he was willing

to squander money till the expense should lead him to bankruptcy, — to furnish troops until Spain should be completely exhausted. He was ready to resort to any plan or undertaking, no matter how vile, no matter how desperate, no matter how costly in money or blood.

The king of Spain was a very different man from his father. Charles V. had been a masterful ruler in his day, a man of action, a soldier who actually fought, a general who really led. At the head of his armies he was a striking figure; he had fought Corsairs along the shores where old Carthage once stood, had confronted embattled Turks on the Austrian frontier, had met Luther face to face at Worms, had led a French king at his triumphal car, had smashed the league of Protestant princes at Mühlberg, and had poured his victorious troops over the walls of Rome, caging the Pope in his castle of St. Angelo. Charles had been a man of flesh and blood, not a cut-and-dried automaton of state moved by the cogs and wheels of court machinery. He would break a lance as bravely as any cavalier in his train; would crack a joke, drink a glass of beer, kiss a pretty girl as readily as any gallant of the court; and he would go into the ring and kill a raging bull as valiantly as any matador in Spain. He spoke many languages, mixed freely with his subjects, was stately with his Spaniards, familiar with his Flemings, and witty with his Italians.

He was ready at any time to do a soldier's work, face any foe, meet any peril. Not that he was a man of dash, for he was phlegmatic; not that he was a man to love, for he was cold as steel, false as water, cruel as the grave.

At the age of fifty-five Charles V. had found himself a physical wreck, the victim of the most wreckless glut-

tony. His four meals a day, beginning with a fowl seethed in milk and dressed with sugar and spices, followed by a dinner of twenty courses and ending with two suppers, — the first at vespers and the second at midnight, — had at last caused a violent insurrection throughout his physical system. Neck, arms, knees, and hands were crippled with gout, running sores broke out all over him, and he was tormented in turn by dyspepsia, gravel, and asthma.

With physical ailments, political misfortunes had overtaken him. His armies had been beaten, and himself almost taken prisoner. The Netherlands were threatened with revolt, the Protestants of Germany had wrenched religious toleration from him, a boyish commander had driven him away from Metz where he left 60,000 dead soldiers, and the Turk, countenanced by the Pope and the king of France, was threatening his dominions in Naples.

The old monarch thought it best to leave the stage. It was time for him to go, and he went. Secluding himself in the monastery of Yuste, he spent the brief remainder of his life in fretting at the mismanagement of his son Philip; in regrets that he had not violated his plighted word and put Luther to death at Worms; in fierce exhortations to the Holy Brotherhood of the Inquisition to burn all heretics; and in a constant round of uncontrollable gluttony, wherein such health-giving delicacies as sardine omelettes, Estramadura sausages, fat flitches of bacon, eel pies, and pickled partridges, struggled as best they could with quince syrups, iced beer, and Rhenish wine.

Philip II. the son was, as we have said, a very differ-

ent man. He was shy, haughty, unsocial, stiff, and formal. Early in his reign he left the field of active life, never to return. He was a man of the closet, a man of the pen. At the time Henry III. was assassinated, Philip had been for many years withdrawn from the gaze of men. For many years he had guided events, not by his presence, but by his underground diplomacy, his bribes, his agents, his spies, his innumerable despatches.

Not far from Madrid he had built a vast palace, in part a residence, in part a house of worship. Here Philip II., another "universal spider," lived and spun far-reaching webs. Seated at a table in a cheerless inner room of this convent-palace, the king, a pale, slight man, clothed in sombre black, had been drudging like a dull methodical clerk for all these years, writing, correcting, signing, and sealing countless despatches whose mission it was to stir up devilment in all quarters of the earth.

Narrow-minded, bilious, and inflexible, Philip II. had, at the very beginning of his reign, conceived the idea of becoming the Defender of the Faith, the armed champion of endangered Catholicism, and the restorer of her supremacy. With this purpose in view, he made and broke treaties, committed and approved crimes, quarrelled with personal friends and plotted with personal enemies, neglected the national interests of Spain, and beggared the inheritance of his children.

Philip is now, in the good year 1590, at the summit of his power, and is writing away at his desk, while couriers wait in the courtyard with horses ready saddled to gallop off with despatches which shall fly to France, to Italy, to Germany, to Holland, to England, — despatches which shall cross the seas and command obedience in far-away Cuba,

Florida, Mexico, and South America. The web stretches from pole to pole: touch it anywhere and the "universal spider" is on the alert. Does a handful of Huguenots insult the king by landing in Florida, and throwing up earthworks in the depths of a trackless forest?

Philip will hear of it, will write a despatch; the courier's departing gallop will be heard in the courtyard, as he dashes away; and when the Huguenot colony is next heard from, the little fort will be in ruins, and its defenders asleep in unmarked graves.

Whereupon, Philip, a pious man and a meek, will fervently thank God, and resume his writing.

Does the Jezebel of England, the heretical Elizabeth, defy the Holy Father, and persecute good Catholics? Does she interfere with Continental politics, succouring Huguenots in France and elsewhere?

Philip II. will scratch away at his desk more busily than ever, will shower despatches right and left, will hurry couriers as fast as they can ride: the tramp of feet will be heard in all his dominions as troops gather to the standards; the saw will grate and the hammer ring in all the dockyards along his coasts; and after a while the majestic Armada spreads its thousand white wings, and bears down upon the coasts of England — carrying the Spanish avengers who are to visit heaven's wrath upon the English and their queen.

In due season this great fleet — "the Invincible Armada" — is ingloriously riddled by English guns, and knocked to pieces by Channel storms, and its huge wreck strews the shores of many lands. Thereupon, the tidings being carried to Philip, he thanks God for what is left, and calmly resumes his writing.

Ever since the battle of St. Quentin, he had been trying to make an ally of France, for the systematic extermination of heretics; Spanish historians say that he spent $100,000,000 in support of the Catholic cause in France. His interference not only cost France a far greater sum than $100,000,000, but cost her also the lives of 1,000,000 men. It was Philip whose eternal despatches and bribes turned every peace into renewed war. It was his money, his indomitable spirit, his aid in troops, which sustained the Guises, the Valois kings, and Catherine de' Medici.

When Henry IV. was on the point of taking Paris, it was Philip who foiled him by ordering up the Prince of Parma to its relief. It was Philip who hung on to Henry, with dogged determination, until Henry left the fight, yielded up the faith in which he was reared, bowed humbly at the feet of a priest, begged pardon, swore fealty to the Church — and thus won peaceful possession of the throne. Not until then, did Philip cease to make war upon Henry.

Spain's ruin can be traced to Philip's reign; and historians therefore set him down as a failure.

I do not. His object was to keep the French crown Catholic, and he did it; to check heresy, and he did it.

France was perhaps about to become Huguenot; Philip arrested that progress and reversed it; in the succeeding reigns France was more Catholic than she had ever been.

Philip annihilated Lutheranism in Spain, Portugal, and Italy; checked it in Austria and Belgium, and barred it out from Mexico, South America, and the Spanish Islands. Both in the Old World and the New, Philip *was* the armed champion of the Church, and to him she largely owes it that the Reformation was so incomplete.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HENRY THE FOURTH (*continued*)

A.D. 1590 IN 1590, Henry IV. laid siege to Dreux. The Duke of Mayenne came up with 16,000 troops. The king had 11,000. The famous battle of Ivry was fought, and Henry won it. "My friends," cried the king, at the beginning of the action, "keep your ranks in good order: if you lose your ensigns, cornets, or guides, the white plume that you see on my helmet will lead you on the way to honour and glory."

The road to Paris was now open; the army of the League destroyed. The king advanced and laid siege to the city. The people held out most obstinately, the priests exerting all their influence to increase their fury against the heretics. Famine soon made the situation horrible to the besieged. Cannibalism was practised, and Henry IV. was so touched by the miseries of the city that he allowed some provisions to run the blockade. His victory was almost within his grasp, and he saw near at hand the end of all his toils. But the man of the Escurial had not been idle: he had been writing, and couriers had been galloping. The Prince of Parma marched up from the Netherlands with his Spanish veterans — he the first soldier of the age. He out-generalled the king completely, threw supplies and reënforcements into Paris, and withdrew into the Netherlands again without the loss of a man.

A.D. 1590

This was very discouraging to Henry. Failing in an attempt to take Paris by stratagem, he retired, and in 1591 laid siege to Rouen. Parma reëntered France to save the city. At Aumale a battle was fought between Henry and the prince. The king was wounded, and narrowly missed capture. The siege was raised. Henry, however, was wonderfully active, and, after some further fighting, he managed to get Parma hemmed in a corner— with the sea on one side, three French armies on another, and the Seine in his rear. Battling with fever, and suffering from a wound though he was, Parma's genius extricated him; in one night he bridged the Seine, and was gone before the king knew his purpose.

A.D. 1591

A.D. 1592

Marshal Biron, one of the king's generals, was suspected of having favoured Parma's escape. The marshal's son applied to him for two thousand horsemen, offering to cut the Spanish rear-guard to pieces. Biron refused, and subsequently said to his son, "Had you done it, the war had been over at once, and you and I would have had nothing more to do but plant cabbages at Biron."

Whether this story be true or not, there can be no doubt that it fairly represents the feelings of many partisan chiefs, on both sides.

Confusion raged at Paris. The young Duke of Guise, son of the Balafré, had returned thither and was hailed as their chief by the communistic Committee of Sixteen, while Mayenne was chief of the aristocratic faction, which bitterly opposed the measures of the faction of the Committee.

Urged on by the priests, the communistic faction seized upon several members of Parliament and put them to death.

Mayenne, in retaliation, seized upon four of the Sixteen, and had their heads chopped off. Thus the League had broken into murderous feuds, and the conservative citizens, of all parties, began to draw together in the interests of peace, property, and personal security.

A.D. 1593 The Leaguers convoked a States General, January 15, 1593, for the purpose of electing a king. Philip II. had a strong party in France which favoured the claims of his daughter Isabella, upon condition that she should wed a French noble. The Duke of Mayenne had been heavily bribed to support the Spanish princes, but his attitude became very uncertain and, on the whole, he did the cause more harm than good.

There was a powerful sentiment against any foreign candidate, even in this assembly which had been carefully packed by the League.

In the face of this national feeling, the traitors who had sold the crown of France to a foreigner, found it impossible to carry out their bargain.

While the minds of the people were in agitation over the conflicting claims of rival parties, the Parliament of Paris, inspired by Edward Molé and Jean Lemaître, proclaimed the Salic Law which debarred women from the throne. This was a serious blow to the Spanish party, and threw them into deeper confusion. The death-wound of the League, it is said, was given by a pamphlet which appeared at this time, the unknown author of which exposed and denounced the designs of Philip and the Pope, and held up to merciless ridicule the greed, egotism, follies, and treacheries of the leaders of the League.

The current of public opinion began to run strongly in Henry's favour, and even in the States General of the

League, there was a large party which declared it would support him if he would become a Catholic.

The crafty king, to whom religion was merely a political fact to be dealt with as any other fact, respectfully invited the Catholic prelates to instruct him and to cure him of his errors. The prelates assented and for six hours laboured with the Huguenot king, who reverently knelt at their feet. When the lesson was over, Henry was extremely tired about the knees but refreshed in spirit, for he had become a Catholic.

Next morning at eight, the new convert, clothed in white as became a purified heretic, appeared at the Cathedral of St. Denis. There was a great crowd present, drums beat, trumpets blared, and simple folks strewed the streets with flowers and bedewed the situation with tears.

As Henry, for whose sake so many Huguenots had fought, suffered, and died, entered the great door of the church, the archbishop of Bourges, gorgeously attired, and attended by a company of priests radiant in purple and gold, said to the king, "Who are you and what do you want?" A.D. 1593

"I am the king," answered Henry, meekly. "I ask to be received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church."

"Do you wish it sincerely?" asked the archbishop.

"I desire it with all my heart," humbly answered Henry.

Falling upon his knees, the king protested that he renounced all heresy, and would live and die in the Catholic faith.

He was then led to the altar, amid the cheers of the dense throng of people present.

Reaching the altar he knelt again and repeated his recantation, unctiously, humbly, earnestly.

The people were immensely edified, and wept copiously.

After the comedy was ended the king went to his dinner, amid the enthusiastic rejoicings of those very Parisians who had hated him so intensely a short while ago that they were patiently enduring all the agonies of a siege — eating dead rats, cats, and dogs, and even their own children — rather than open their gates to Henry the Huguenot.

In public Henry had acted the part of the returning prodigal with consummate art. He had beat his breast with his hands, fixed his gaze adoringly upon the Eucharist, put sobs in his voice, and penitential sadness into his eyes.

In private he made a mockery of the whole business, and declared himself heartily sick of it.

Two days before he was "converted," he wrote to Gabrielle d'Estrées, his mistress, "Sunday is to be the day when I shall make the somersault that brings down the house."

Great was the excitement which Henry's apostasy produced throughout France.

The extreme Catholics judged the transaction with absolute accuracy, and they violently denounced the hypocrisy, the brazen imposture of the king's conversion.

The extreme Huguenots had far better reason to feel outraged. They had made Henry their hero, had trusted him, shielded him, advanced him, pouring out blood and treasure without stint in his service, and now it had all come to this — their idolized leader had thrown them off, "as a huntsman his pack," when the chase is done.

But while this natural feeling prevailed at both extremes of the line, those who occupied the middle ground rallied to the king immediately. Moderate Catholics rejoiced exceedingly that they had won their king — a Frenchman, brave, and strong, and good-hearted; while moderate Huguenots were satisfied to have peace and protection even though they lost a leader.

Mayenne adjourned the States General of the League, and it met no more.

Although Henry had been received back into the Church, he had not been formally crowned. It was highly expedient that he should be.

But a difficulty presented itself. The phial containing the holy oil, without which no king could be consecrated, was at Rheims, and Rheims was still in the possession of the League.

Most fortunately, however, the priests discovered, at this critical juncture, that there was another phial in France, quite as sacred as that of Rheims, which was preserved in the church of Marmoutier, near Tours. This phial of Marmoutier contained what was left of the balsam with which an angel had cured the wounds of St. Martin nearly a thousand years before.

The monks of Marmoutier being applied to, consented to lend the phial containing the miraculous balsam of St. Martin, for Henry's coronation, and under strong military escort, the said balsam was carried in state from Tours to Chartres where the consecration of the king was to take place, and four young nobles were left in pawn to the monks as security for the return of the precious relic.

All Chartres turned out to greet the king; the streets

A.D. 1594 were hung with tapestry, and resounded with the happy shouts of a great multitude.

Again Henry performed his part admirably. Six bishops, clad in resplendent robes, solemnly assisted in the ceremony. The king knelt, repeated his lesson once more, took the customary oath, was balsamed instead of oiled, and rose from his knees much stronger in his title to the throne, so far as public opinion went.

The Pope obstinately hung back and would not admit the validity of Henry's absolution, nor the efficacy of the holy balsam. Neither would Philip of Spain see any merit in the comedies which Henry had been enacting.

Therefore the war continued. Philip supplied men and money; the Pope supplied spiritual support and comfort.

The French nation was rallying to its king, but there was arduous work yet to be done, before the crown was to rest securely upon his head.

The Duke of Mayenne had withdrawn from Paris to receive reënforcements on the frontier of Champagne, leaving the Count of Brissac in command.

Henry had failed signally in his attempts to take the city by force; he now tried fraud, and succeeded.

De Brissac sold out at a fancy price and opened the gates to Henry on the night of March 22, 1594. No resistance was offered except by the Spanish guards, who were soon cut down.

The Spanish garrison left next day, accompanied by all of Philip's emissaries. As they filed past the king he laughingly said, "Gentlemen, present my compliments to your master, but come here no more."

War still continued in all parts of the kingdom, but the king steadily gained ground. Some towns he took, some

he purchased, some voluntarily came over to him. One by one he bought off the opposing nobles, some with offices, some with money, some with both. Wonderfully winning was the genial king, in whose heart dwelt neither deep hatred nor true love. Even the Duchess of Montpensier, sister of the murdered Guise, became his partisan, and welcomed him to her home.

In 1595, a Jesuit made an attempt upon the king's life, instigated, it was thought, by Philip II. of Spain. Henry expelled the Jesuits, and declared war upon Philip. A.D. 1595

In the skirmish of Fontaire-Française, Henry, with only 300 horse, defeated nearly 2000 of Mayenne's troops, composed of Spaniards, French, and mongrel mercenaries.

Mayenne soon afterwards gave in his adhesion to Henry, the Pope having formally absolved him. The Pope, Clement VIII., had been very slow — almost too much so. He had repeatedly rejected Henry's overtures and repulsed his embassies. The French king wearied of this and broke off negotiations. As it became clearer and clearer that Henry was developing into a successful and popular king, the Pope began to be desirous of avoiding the schism, which his obstinate refusal to pardon a penitent king might cause. Therefore he intimated that Henry would have better luck if he would send another embassy. Henry held back and the Pope was getting anxious, but at length the embassy arrived. The Pope demanded that Henry should surrender his crown and receive it back from him. To this demand Henry made absolute refusal, and the Pope withdrew it.

On a vast platform, erected in front of the church of St. Peter, the Pope, beneath a magnificent canopy, and in presence of an immense crowd of spectators, smote the A.D. 1595

shoulders of Henry's representatives, Duperron and Dossat, twice with his crozier, in token of the chastisement the offended Church inflicted upon the erring but repentant king. This comedy being ended, Henry's pardon was ceremoniously proclaimed.

The Huguenots were immeasurably disgusted with this self-abasement on the part of the French king, and some of the principal leaders of that party withdrew from the army, followed by a large body of private soldiers.

Under these circumstances the Spanish war resulted in no events of special importance; Henry gained some advantages, and Philip gained some, and the Treaty of
A.D. 1598 Vervins (1598) put an end to the struggle. Philip retained Cambray, and surrendered the remainder of his conquests.

Henry was now very definitely and indisputably the king of France, and could devote himself to the general welfare of his kingdom.

In April, 1598, the Edict of Nantes was issued. Under this decree, the Huguenots were guaranteed liberty of conscience and freedom of worship in their own castles, and in those towns where their worship had already been established; or, at least, in one town in each bailliage. Schools and public offices were to be thrown open to them; mixed tribunals, half-Catholic, half-Protestant, were to try cases in which Protestants were concerned; the right to assemble in general council once every three years was conceded; and certain towns and cities were left in their control as security for the rights granted them.

This celebrated edict defines the true status of the French Huguenots, — that of a grudgingly tolerated minority. As the great Protestant nobles went over to

Henry, nearly all of them, like him, left their religion behind. The nobles, almost to a man, had worn the cloak of Protestantism for political purposes, as Henry himself had done; and when the king threw the cloak aside, the courtiers imitated his example. The Reformed faith was no longer to be found in the castles; it nestled among the cottages and the huts. It no longer boasted princes of the blood-royal, Condés and Bourbons; it no longer counted among its faithful, De Rohans, Bouillons, and La Rochefaucaulds. Even Sully's children were Catholics—that sober Huguenot having been made a duke. From henceforth Protestantism in France was confined almost exclusively to the middle and lower classes.

Court favour is the light of life to a needy, extravagant, and ambitious nobility; court favour was Catholic; the nobles became Catholic also.

Henry IV. reduced the policy of bribery to a science, and had unlimited confidence in the efficacy of ready cash.

Failing to get Paris by the sword, or by apostatizing, he had bought it, giving Brissac 200,000 crowns, besides the office of marshal, and the government of Corbeil and Mantes.

Twice had Henry tried to take the city of Rouen; twice had he failed. He decided to buy it, and sent Sully, his confidential minister, to bribe the governor of the city, Villars.

Sully found his man open to negotiations, but absurdly high in his price. Sully, like a good servant, refused to pay, and reported to the king.

"My friend," wrote Henry to Sully, cheerfully, "you are an ass. Give the man his price. We will afterwards pay everything with the very things they surrender to

us," — whereupon Sully closed the bargain, and Rouen was given up to Henry. Villars got the office of admiral, which the king with great difficulty bought from Biron for 120,000 crowns, and also the sum of 3,447,800 livres for himself and certain friends of his whom he felt compelled to take care of in the bargain.

To the Lord of Villeroi was paid the bribe of 476,594 livres. Finally the Duke of Mayenne himself was bought off from the Spanish alliance, obtaining for himself and certain friends a sum of money equal to nearly $3,000,000 of our currency.

In the table drawn up by Sully, it appears that the various bribes paid by Henry to "pacify" his Catholic foes aggregated the sum of 180,000,000 francs, equal to $36,000,000.

Much of this money was borrowed in Venice and in Florence, but most of it came from French taxes. Right royally could Henry bribe, knowing that the money would come from the compatriots of the men bribed.

As soon as his crown was securely on his head, Henry set his ministers to the task of administrative and financial reform.

The taxes were heavy, and the men who bought the privilege of collecting them greatly abused their power. They were called farmers-general, because they farmed the taxes; that is, they would purchase from the king for a certain sum the revenues of a certain district, then they themselves collected the revenues, and the king concerned himself no more about it. The natural consequence was that the king got much less than the tax should have yielded, whereas, the people were squeezed into paying much more than was just or legal.

Sully overhauled the system, discovered huge frauds, compelled restitutions, and, while lessening the burden on the people, derived a larger net revenue for the crown. He thus paid off 147,000,000 livres of the debt, and accumulated a surplus of 20,000,000 livres in the royal treasury, after having spent 40,000,000 livres on public works, and having bought back 80,000,000 livres' worth of the royal domains.

Henry and his ministers encouraged agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. Roads were opened and great canals projected. The canal of Briare, which connects the Loire and the Seine, was commenced and completed. Henry also favoured colonies, and sent Champlain to Canada to found Port Royal, now Annapolis, and Quebec.

None of the Bourbon kings approached Henry in general popularity. He was easy of approach, affable, good-natured, kind-hearted, gay, and fearless. He shared hardships with his soldiers, mixed freely with the people, and had a thought for the good of his kingdom.

He was not, perhaps, a great soldier. Parma made a child of him, and he only won where dash and courage could snatch the prize. But he was ever sanguine, ever active, ever ready to fight, and he made an ideal party-chief.

He gradually broadened into a statesman as his career advanced. It was a cruel ingratitude to throw the Protestants over, but it was wise policy in the king of France. A much stronger man than he also felt obliged to reinstate the Catholic religion, after the Revolution of 1789; and the fact that Napoleon did it proves its policy, for he made even less pretence of being religious than did Henry IV.

Profoundly attentive to his own interest was Henry, always — changing his plans, his friends, his allies, and his religion, in the twinkling of an eye, if necessity compelled. Born and reared a Protestant, he became a Catholic at the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and remained so for several years; then, when he joined the Protestant forces, became Huguenot again, and remained so for several years more; then turned his coat once more, became a Catholic, and remained one, until the Jesuits, after having made nineteen attempts upon his life, succeeded in the twentieth. It was his misfortune bitterly to enrage the extremists of both religions, and the Jesuits, representing the extreme Catholics, hunted him down.

Henry was tricky and shifty and full of guile. He was false to his wives, and false also to his mistresses. He neither exacted loyalty in love, nor gave it. Nor did he have either gratitude or resentment. He forgave enemies and forgot friends with all the easy, good-natured selfishness of Charles II. of England.

He was fond of that kind of speaking or acting which in our day is called playing to the grand stand. He did it with great effect. His saying that he wanted his soldiers to have asylums for their old age, and each peasant to have a fowl in the pot every Sunday, endeared him to the people in his own day, and has kept his name in grateful remembrance ever since.

In spite of his defects — and they were many and serious — there was a manliness, a brilliancy, a magnetism, a practical sound-headedness about Henry IV. which compelled admiration. To the last day of his life he was ready to leap his horse, flash out his sword, and cry "Follow me!" to the chivalry of France, to

dash headlong into the thickest of the fight, and to stay there till everybody else was tired.

He loved pretty women, and, when young in war, would gallop in hot haste from the field, leaving his army sadly in need of orders, to lay the captured flags at the feet of his lady-love.

One forgives much to a man of this sort — a real flesh-and-blood man who loves and fights, and who combats faction, bigotry, rebellion, conspiracy, anarchy, until order comes forth from chaos.

Eight hundred thousand people had been slaughtered in the religious wars, nine cities levelled to the ground, 250 villages burned, 128,000 houses destroyed. Workmen had lost work, commerce had been paralyzed, agriculture prostrated, manufactures crippled, and anarchy let loose everywhere.

To breathe into this exhausted France the inspiration of a new life was Henry's task as a king, and he did it. His ready smile, his winning courtesy, his conciliatory methods, his strong hand, his sound common sense, his shrewd knowledge of human nature all worked together to pacify, compromise, encourage, and control the discordant elements which repeated civil wars had evoked. When he fell under the knife of fanaticism, his work had been done, and well done. France was strong, prosperous, and at peace with herself.

The last years of the reign were beclouded by one of those scrapes about a woman into which Henry was perpetually running. He fell violently in love with Charlotte de Montmorency, and induced his nephew Condé to marry her, believing that Condé would be so obliging as to overlook the king's fondness for his wife. Condé,

however, determined to keep his wife for himself, and there being no security for him or her at court, he retired with her to Brussels.

Henry IV., the Great Henry, made all Europe ring with the scandal of trying to compel a young husband, a prince of his own royal blood, to bring his wife back to the arms of the king.

Failing in all overt measures, the infatuated Henry stooped to an attempt at kidnapping the lady, and the plan would perhaps have succeeded had not the queen sent warning to the intended victim.

Herein lay the weakness of Henry's character, that he was always the slave of some woman.

It is a curious picture of the times which Sully has drawn in his Memoirs, and of a monarch, great to the world and small in his own household.

His Italian wife, Marie de' Medici, had brought with her to France, her foster-sister, the famous Galigai, and the husband of this woman, Concini.

This couple ruled the queen. They played upon her jealousy, her spitefulness, and her pride, until she made the king's life a torment to him. Henry attributed all this domestic bickering to the Concini, and endured it until Sully himself marvelled at his forbearance. To his faithful minister he unbosomed himself freely, and declared that he believed a plot was on foot to kill him.

"In Heaven's name, Sire," exclaimed Sully, "if that be so, why do you not drive these people away?"

Nothing was done, however, and the plot ripened.

A.D. 1610 The king had made extensive preparations for a war against Spain and Austria; the troops were already in

motion; but the king delayed his departure from Paris to please his wife, who wished to be formally crowned before Henry set out for the army.

That the king was depressed by the gloomiest forebodings in connection with this coronation is certain. Sully in his Memoirs, tells that time and again the king declared his uneasiness — his presentiment of approaching death.

Sully protested that if the king felt in this way the coronation could easily be postponed, but Henry would not consent. The minister was so deeply impressed with the king's forebodings that he took the responsibility of ordering the preparations stopped, but the queen pleaded with Henry and they were resumed.

"Ah, my friend," said the king, who soon repented of yielding, "I shall never go out of this city: they will murder me here."

What was the dark mystery back of all this? No one can tell. Sully felt obliged to suppress what he knew, and the record of Ravaillac's trial was destroyed.

Henry had bitter enemies, personal and political, foreign and domestic. His wife surely did not love him, and the Concini deeply hated him. More than one cast-off mistress, cruelly wronged, was close at hand, willing to strike, and supported by powerful kinsmen. Extreme Catholics hated him for the toleration and favours shown to Huguenots; extreme Huguenots hated him for the favours and toleration granted to Catholics, and doubly damned him for his apostasy. Above all, he was about to hurl armies of invasion against Catholic powers. Rumours were flying abroad that he even meant to assail the Pope. Thus we can see that from several different quarters danger might arise to Henry's life.

A.D. 1610 On May 13, 1610, the queen's coronation took place. During all the day the king was restless and sad. On the next day his gloom increased. About four o'clock in the evening the captain of his guard said to him, "Sire, your majesty is very pensive; a short airing will cheer your spirits."

"You say well," answered Henry; "call my coach and I will go to the arsenal to see Sully."

Issuing from the palace, attended by a few friends, the king entered his coach. The weather being fine, the carriage was open on all sides. A hay-cart and a dray-load of wine blocked the street, and the carriage stopped. At this moment François Ravaillac, who had been following the king, mounted on the wheel and struck him with a knife. Henry cried out, "I am wounded!" The assassin thrust again, the knife reached the heart, and, heaving a deep sigh, the king died instantly.

Ravaillac made no effort to escape and was put to death with horrible tortures, — firm to the last in declaring that he had no accomplices, and had killed the king because he had not brought the Huguenots back to the bosom of the Church, and because it was said that he was about to make war on the Pope.

CHAPTER XXIX

GENERAL SURVEY

Social and Economic Conditions

HISTORIANS tell us that the middle and lower classes prospered during the two centuries of which we have been writing.

The absolute power which the kings had grasped, gave unity and strength to the government, and security to the people. Commerce flourished in spite of robber lords, for the towns organized against the castles, and while the knights clung tenaciously to their time-honoured privilege of despoiling the merchant traveller, they gradually had to get used to seeing the good old custom pass away. Manufactures sprang up and mines were developed; traders became richer than nobles; fine houses adorned every town and city, and no more magnificent churches have ever been built in Europe than those which were erected in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It may be doubted whether, even in this day of millionaires and fabulous expenditures, any monarch, or noble, or head of a corporation could succeed in building a palace, at once so beautiful and so durable as those which were constructed in France and other European countries during the time of Francis I. and his successors.

The economic or industrial world was highly organized. The individual amounted to nothing; the organization was everything. There was a corporation or guild for every trade and calling; even the beggars were thoroughly organized in the Beggars' Guild.

The guild was not like a modern syndicate or corporation, whose members may not even know each other, and who may be, except in the business in hand, totally disconnected. In the mediæval guild, the idea of family, of kinship, and of a mutual interest, permeated the whole life of each member, religiously, socially, and politically.

The guild was a coöperative brotherhood. Every member had his share in the common property of the organization, was under obligation to labour, and to obey the rules of the guild, and had an equal right to enjoy all the advantages pertaining to the particular trade which his guild covered. No contractor was allowed. All had to work. There were guild masters, but these had to work also, and if a guild master was taken sick, the council of the order decided who should carry on his business.

The guild bought the raw material, and distributed it among the members in relatively equal proportions.

Every master had equal right to the use of the common property. In some industries, woollen manufactures, for instance, the guild owned all the essentials of production, — wool kitchens, carding rooms, bleaching houses, etc., — and these were common to the whole guild.

The guild was thoroughly patriarchal in its character. The education of the journeyman in handicraft, as well as the supervision of his morals, was carefully attended to, and sick or disabled apprentices and journeymen were

maintained. On coming into a strange town, a travelling member of a guild was certain of a friendly reception at the hands of resident members of that guild, and of the means of subsistence until he could get work.

Good work and honest dealings were exacted by each guild of its members, and their laws against adulteration and the like were almost savage in their severity.

In the year 1456 two grocers were burnt at Nuremberg for adulterating saffron and spices. A similar instance occurred at Augsburg in 1492. In some towns bakers who did not properly make their bread were shut up in a basket fixed to the end of a pole, and soused to the bottom of a pool of dirty water, as many times as were thought necessary to reform and make better tradesmen of them.

Thus each guild was a large industrial family, bound together by mutual interest, and dividing among its members, according to certain rules of proportion, the joint product of their labour.

As to the outside world, the guild was a monopoly. It controlled production and fixed prices, sternly limiting the number of workmen as well as the amount produced by them. Admission to a guild became difficult; and as it grew in wealth and power upon its monopoly great complaints were heard from the people who had to pay the exorbitant prices.

Wages, judged by what the money would buy, were good in the fifteenth century.

In South Germany the average price of beef was about half a cent per pound, while the daily wages of carpenters and masons, in addition to their keep, amounted to about eight cents per day. In Saxony the same workmen

earned, besides their keep, nine cents per day. In addition to this the workman was given a certain sum each week to pay for the expense of washing himself. This wholesome gratuity was known as bathing money. In every town there were the needful arrangements for bathing, both in winter and summer; and it was a customary thing with the guilds to demand for their workmen a holiday once in a fortnight, and sometimes oftener, for the purpose of bathing.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century a day-labourer could earn, besides his keep, twenty-two cents. A pair of shoes cost him seven cents; a sheep ten cents; a fat hen about one and a half cents; twenty-five codfish ten cents; a wagon-load of firewood, delivered, twelve cents; an ell of the best homespun cloth twelve cents; a bushel of rye about fifteen cents.

Thus it appears that the necessaries of life were marvellously cheap; and we are assured by the best authorities that the labouring people in the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth enjoyed very general comfort. Of course human nature is the same everywhere, and in the guilds, as elsewhere, a few master workmen got the lion's share of the earnings of the brotherhood.

As the sixteenth century wore on, however, there was a fourfold rise in the prices of produce, without a corresponding rise in the wages of labour.

Outside the narrow, tyrannical, and unprogressive guilds great mercantile enterprises were being pushed by individual merchants or by trading companies. Vasco da Gama's discovery of the new route to the Indies by way of Cape Horn opened up the markets of the world

as they had not been opened before, and Europe felt the consequences. Barter ceased to play so important a part in exchanges. Money became more and more the one prime necessity. Without money the noble could not obtain the imported luxuries which he so much coveted. Without money the rich burgher could not get the silks and tapestries, the spices and jewels with which to make a gaudier display than the noble could afford. Trade no longer being confined to home folk and to home products, barter was impossible. Cash was indispensable. Thus the demand for ready money was immensely increased by this foreign commerce, while the supply of money remained the same.

The natural and inevitable consequence was a rise in the price of money, answering to the increased demand. That is to say, it required more labour, and more produce, to buy money; and the money, after having been bought with a greater quantity of produce, did not pay any greater amount of debts, or of public dues, than it had formerly done when it was cheaper.

The result was misery among those who, not having the cash, were obliged to take their labour or their produce into the market and exchange them for money.

This pressure for money fell upon kings, princes, and prelates, as well as upon the lowly. To get the funds which they needed, the dignitaries of both Church and State bore down upon the peasant with unmerciful severity. Public burdens were increased, new ones invented, and free men forced into servitude by forgery of manorial rolls. If it came to the ears of a lord that a certain peasant had money, that peasant was certain to have trouble. If he neglected his lord's invitation to disgorge,

the rats of the castle dungeon would probably make an early feast upon the obstinate serf.

The ecclesiastical lords were rather worse than those temporal. They were more skilful at forging manorial documents, which would prove that a certain peasant who had supposed himself to be a free man, and had acted all his life upon that assumption, was in fact a serf, bound to render up whatever his lord might demand.

Besides such frauds as these, the Church compelled the payment of enormous sums on every change of archbishop, bishop, or abbot; and this sum had to be raised by the citizens of the diocese.

In addition to this, the entire revenues of the district for one year had to be paid into the papal treasury after each change in the ecclesiastical offices named. Again, there were the sale of indulgences and the manufacture of relics. These pious and inexpensive branches of industry were earnestly developed, and the faithful were expected to be liberal in their patronage.

Some of the priests themselves, not being wholly devoid of the sense of humour, mocked the ceremonial deception which imposed upon the superstitious, and they invented the Festival of Fools, and the Festival of Asses, as a travesty upon the sacred mysteries, and a satire upon those who were duped.

Luther, who had been a priest, relates that at the celebration of the mass, where the faithful congregation believes that the wine becomes the actual blood of Christ, and the bread his actual body, the officiating priests, whose duty it was to mutter, "Bread thou art and flesh thou shalt become," would slyly mutter the more truthful statement, "Bread thou art and bread thou shalt remain."

The earth is full of the decaying bones of those stubborn men and women who were slain by the Church because they could not believe in transubstantiation: who could not believe that the word of a priest could turn wine into Christ's blood, and bread into His flesh.

It was a common thing for priests to keep gambling and ale houses. One of the princes of the German empire addressed the friar of a convent, largely patronized by aristocratic ladies, as "Thou, our common brother-in-law!" In some of the convents the bastards of the nuns, begotten by the monks, were reared as monks and nuns.

All over the world men were still busy trying to discover the Elixir of Life, the means by which base metals could be turned into gold, and the Philosopher's Stone which was to put the forces of nature at the service of the fortunate possessor.

Science was strangely fettered by superstition, and to be unusually skilled in chemistry, the practice of medicine, and the like, was perilous. The charge of witchcraft was a deadly weapon, ever ready to the hand of malice; and the proofs which established the discovery of a new remedy, or a new scientific fact, might be quite sufficient to convince an ignorant tribunal that the discoverer was in league with the devil. In that event, the unlucky student who had dared to know more than his neighbours was burnt at the stake, and thus became a warning to others who might presume to improve on the methods of their fathers.

The physicians shed more blood than professional soldiers, a practice which continued almost to our own day.

For every disease, they bled the patient. If he were apoplectic, they bled him; if he had chills, they bled him; if he had fever, the cure was the same; if he were wounded in battle and had lost nearly all his blood, the first thing the surgeon did was to cut another hole in him and let out still more.

Wounds were cauterized with red-hot iron bars; and great faith was put in placing upon the patient's chest the newly flayed body of some animal.

In special cases the bone-dust of dead saints was mixed with the medicine, and the potion administered with every formality which could inspire faith in the patient. If the man died it was for want of faith, and therefore the conscience of the doctor was clear.

Impostures of every sort prevailed. The people knew so little, and thought so little, that they could be deceived in every conceivable way.

The rustic mind was pliant wax, and dishonest priests could write upon it whatsoever fiction they wished. The people were told of miracles here and miracles there, and faith gaped, her mouth wide open, and gulped down the fraud. Statues sweated or wept, the Virgin appeared and conversed in Latin, angels quit their celestial harping to show the monks where the bones of a certain saint for which there was a market demand could be found; and the business of "casting out of devils" was carried on with regularity and success.

At the church of St. Mark, at Venice, the faithful could find such relics as the chair of the Virgin Mary, made of stone; a picture of her, painted by St. Luke; two marble slabs spotted with the blood of John the Baptist; a piece of the true cross, and of the pillar to which Christ

was tied; the rock which Moses struck; and the body of St. Mark himself.

And the people believed it all.

At Cologne, they had at the Cathedral the bones of the three kings who brought gifts to our Lord; likewise, the bones of eleven thousand alleged virgins whom the Moors were said to have slain. At the church of the Maccabees, in Cologne, they had the identical pot in which the Maccabees and their mother, Solomona, were boiled by the wicked king, for refusing to eat unclean food.

Of course, they also had at Cologne a piece of wood of the true cross, and one of the nails.

At Rome, there was exhibited to the faithful a true impression of our Saviour's face, taken at the Crucifixion. This picture was only shown at rare intervals, and when the devout multitude caught a glimpse of it, they would fall down on their faces crying aloud in their pious fervour. The heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, made of wax (unknown to the people), were also exhibited. These heads were placed on a high shelf where the light was dim, and a curtain was hung in front. The curtain being raised, the faithful would throw themselves on the floor, and weep and shout in their excitement and ecstatic religious fervour.

Of course, there was also at Rome a piece of the true cross, and one of the nails. No important church in those days lacked such relics.

Nearly everybody had some special saint from whom protection was expected and to whom prayers and votive offerings were made. The sick man being grievously afraid of death would vow to give his patron saint his weight in bread and cheese if he would restore him

to health. If health returned, the cure went to the credit of the saint, and the bread and cheese were handed over to the Church.

Warriors going into battle would make similar mental bargains with this or that saint, and if the battle left the warrior alive, he would settle the debt with the Church as a matter of course.

Private houses were warmed by braziers or stoves, or open chimneys; but the brazier, burning coal, was most unsatisfactory; the huge clay stove was confined to one room; and the open fireplace was so clumsily built that one side of the body roasted while the other froze. One fireplace to each house was the ordinary rule for common people.

At hotels the innkeeper decided which men should sleep together; and all the guests ate at a common table, at the same hour.

At inns of the better class, the traveller was shown the sheets he was to sleep on, and they were warmed for him, if the weather were cold.

For amusement, the people had marriage festivals, rural games, shooting-matches with crossbows, fairs in the cities, the free entertainment of princes, and the performance of Mysteries.

These latter were sacred plays in which nothing would seem to us sacred, for the virtues and the vices, God and the Devil, were all personified and spoke sad trash to the wondering audience.

In each city there were schools, and in the cities where the guilds were organized these schools were practically free to all, but, as a rule, education was completely under the control of the Church.

Dress distinguished the rank of the wearer then to a much greater degree than now. Peasants wore cloth hats, laced shoes or wooden clogs, brown cloaks and leather jackets; the lawyer wore his robes; priests had their cassocks; the knights were cased in armour; while princes wore silk, velvet, and cloth of gold.

Gunpowder was beginning to lift a loud voice in behalf of democracy. It was found that no mail-clad rider, cased ever so cunningly in panoply of steel, could stand before peasant foot-soldiers armed with muskets. The immediate consequence was that aristocratic knights on horses, armed with swords and lances, became much less important in war than the man in the ranks who relied on gunpowder. Becoming less important in war, the aristocrats gradually lost their monopoly of power in the State. In other words, gunpowder was a leveller. It put the poor man and the physically weak man on more of an equality with the rich and the physically strong.

The firearms of that period were very cumbersome and crude. Not only was the musket large and heavy, but it had no tube and percussion-cap; it did not even have a flint and steel. It had the "pan" at the touch-hole where the loose powder was poured, but in order to fire it off the soldier had to light a match, the match being almost as slow and cumbersome in its operations as was the musket.

In the Tower of London is preserved a mediæval musket, contrived to load at the breech, but the mechanical skill of that day was not sufficient to work out to a practical success the idea of the nameless genius who thus anticipated the needle-guns of our own time.

Gunpowder was a good democrat in another respect. It demonstrated to the high and mighty feudal chief, who dwelt in a fortified castle, and exercised as a prerogative of the knightly order the right to plunder the traveller, that no walls he could build would resist cannon-balls. When the chief became convinced of this fact, he abandoned the building of fortresses on high hills and came to town, built him a palace, mixed with the common herd, and looked to court intrigue to obtain the money of other people, — which he had been used to take by force. The essence of the crime and its consequences were not much altered; the form of it, however, was more polished, decorous, and satisfactory to all concerned.

Books in the fifteenth century there were almost none. The kings, the Pope, and the wealthy monasteries had a few manuscript copies of the Scriptures, "Lives of the Saints," Plutarch, Virgil, and other old masters; but the collection of the mightiest monarch was scanty compared to that of the poorest scholar of our times. And, necessarily, it was not the people at large who had access to these manuscripts. Only the favoured few ever saw them or, perhaps, cared to see them. Among the common people, among the dumb millions who fed and clothed and housed and fought for their lay and clerical masters, there were absolutely no such things as books.

The immense difference between our own times and those we have been considering, was brought about by the Printing-press — as remorseless a leveller as gunpowder itself, and more irresistible.

CHAPTER XXX

LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH AND RICHELIEU

THE eldest son of the murdered Henry IV., was nine years old when he became king under the name of Louis XIII.

His mother Maria de' Medici, "the fat bankeress of Florence," as Henry's mistress, the beautiful and injured Gabrielle, had contemptuously called her, became regent.

At first, Henry's ministers were retained in office and his wise policies pursued, but in a short time a secret cabal in the palace came into control, and all was changed.

An Italian adventurer, Concino Concini, whose wife, a person of low degree and high aims, was foster-sister to the regent, secured, in collusion with a Jesuit, Father Cottin, absolute control of the administration.

Sully found that secret influences counteracted his plans, and he resigned in disgust. With him went the strength of the government. A.D. 1611

Direction of affairs having fallen into weak hands, each grandee began to augment his pride, importance, and expectations.

"The day of the kings has passed," said they; "this is the day of the lords."

Many of them shut themselves up in the walled cities in their own domains, and aspired to independence.

Soon there was a clash between the royal will and theirs,

and the nobles, under the lead of Condé, revolted. They published a manifesto in which they declared that the court had lowered the nobility, ruined the finances, and oppressed "the poor people."

The poor people made a shrewd guess (for once) that the nobles cared little about their woes, and they let the nobles and the court fight it out. The result was that no fighting was done. Maria, copying the weakest
A.D. 1614 part of the great Henry's policy, bought off the opposition. Condé received 450,000 livres, the Duke of Mayenne 300,000, De Longueville 100,000, and so on. The poor people got nothing — except the luxury of being taxed to pay the bribes which the nobles had accepted.

The States General was convened October 14, 1614. It was their last meeting until 1789.

Among the deputies was a young priest, named Armand du Plessis de Richelieu, a man of good lineage, and already eminent for talent and learning. He was chosen by the clergy as their orator to present their memorial to the Assembly, though he was but twenty-nine years old. The manner and the matter of his oration increased his reputation, and he was from that time a national figure in the politics of France.

At this meeting of the States General, the three orders, the clergy, nobles, and commons, were all represented; but they were not in accord.

The clergy occupied itself with ecclesiastical demands. It insisted upon a further recognition of the power of the Holy Roman Church.

Its representatives refused to take up any part of the public burdens, saying that if they did so they would thereby detract from the glory of God.

The nobles concerned themselves about offices and pensions. They wanted newcomers kept out.

The commons, the Third Estate, demanded a reduction of the pensions paid the grandees, freedom of elections, extension of municipal privileges and security for those already granted, the calling together of the States General at least once in ten years, a suppression of useless offices, a just division of the public burdens, the reduction of the number of military offices, the suppression of duels, the abolition of customs duties and other restrictions on internal trade, speedier and cheaper trials of law cases, the equality of all before the law, the emancipation of serfs, and a fairer division of the Church revenues so that the poor curates might get more and the rich bishops less. They also demanded the laying of protective duties upon foreign merchandise.

Disagreements, many and hot, broke out among the delegates, and they did nothing but wrangle. The court intervened, closed up their hall of meeting, and the delegates melted away.

The demands of the Third Estate are very remarkable, as showing that the grievances of the common people were the same in 1614 as they were in 1789. Not the least noticeable feature of these demands is the request that foreign merchandise should be taxed at the custom-house before it could be sold in France; the result of which would have been that the Frenchman who manufactured goods of like kind could, to the extent of the tax, exclude foreign competition. At the time the manufacturers of France put forth this request, it was a novelty. There were then no protective customs duties in all the world. The duties were asked for in behalf

of the manufacturers, who were looking out for their own interests in 1614, just as they are doing at the present day, — just as they have the right to do always. But the manufacturers at that time had no labour vote to fear, and thus they were under no political necessity of saying that they wanted protective duties laid upon foreign goods for the benefit of the labourers. Being so situated that they could afford to tell the truth, they came up like men and said they wanted the law in order that they might get higher prices for their own goods. In other words, the French capitalist wished to shut out the competition of the foreign capitalist; and that purely selfish motive is the soul of every tariff system, no matter how many plausible things to the contrary may be said to the labourers during political campaigns.

A.D. 1615 In 1615, Condé and his nobles found that they could no longer endure the hardships which the government imposed upon the poor people, and they once more revolted. This time they drew the Protestants into the quarrel and got some of them killed.

A.D. 1616 The regent bought peace in May, 1616, paying 20,000,000 livres for it. Condé alone got 1,500,000 livres.

Maria then reorganized her administration, taking into it Richelieu, who had become bishop of Luçon. The vigour of his hand was at once felt. Condé was arrested and thrown into the Bastille, just as though he had been a common scoundrel, and his followers, who talked of raising an insurrection at Paris, heard some language from Richelieu which cooled their blood. He appealed to public opinion, by issuing an address setting forth the selfish and unlawful designs of the nobles, and deprived some of them of

their dignities, while three armies were sent into the field to suppress the revolts in Picardy, Champagne, and Berry.

The revolt of the young king from his mother's control changed everything.

The adventurer Concini had gone too far. He had disgusted even his own party by his gluttonous appetite for money and office; had he been a prince of the blood, he could not have been greedier.

He was also arrogant to the nobles — a most unbearable offence; and one day, as the climax of his insolent presumption, he dared to ask the king to allow him, Concini, to keep on his hat while playing a game of billiards with the young monarch, whom he had partly reared.

The king was angered to his very marrow; and from that moment Concini was a lost man.

There was a young fellow named Albert de Luynes, son of plain country people, who was the trainer of the king's hawks.

This young man, who came in contact with the king often and had won his personal friendship, formed the design of becoming the king's favourite, and thus displacing Concini.

With this hawk-trainer of his, and the head gardener, and the captain of the guards, Louis XIII., now sixteen years of age, entered into a plot to kill Concini.

The king gave a formal order for his arrest, and the captain of the guards, understanding what was wanted, shot him dead.

The king appeared upon the scene, thanked the murderer, and his faithful subjects cried, "Long live the king!" Concini's wife was arrested, tried for sorcery, convicted, beheaded, and her body burnt. A.D. 1617

Maria de' Medici, the queen-mother, was ordered to leave the court, and to retire to Blois. In her fall Richelieu fell. He was sent back to his bishopric.

To Concini Richelieu had owed his first promotion. The Italian had recognized the genius of the great Frenchman, and had not been jealous of it. Richelieu is said to have known of the plot against his benefactor, and could have warned and thus saved him. He did neither. He either feared he should involve himself in peril, or he considered that Concini's removal would leave him, Richelieu, the favourite and the ruler of the queen-mother. Concini was generally known as Marshal D'Ancre, and his death did leave Richelieu master of the queen-mother.

Albert de Luynes reaped the reward which he sought. As a spoilsman he never had a superior. He enriched himself out of the public treasury and then called in all of his country kin. The whole family trooped to Paris and got offices, pensions, lands, and money.

The nobles, justly incensed at seeing the spoils monopolized in this aggravating manner, went to war about it. Pretending that they were hurt at the way in which the king had treated his mother, they mustered their forces in such goodly array that De Luynes, who was no warrior, had to buy them off. Richelieu brought about peace, and the queen-mother secured good terms in the general pacification.

A.D. 1619

The Protestants for many years had been discontented. After the apostasy of Henry IV., the triumphant Catholics had made it unpleasant to the disheartened minority. Grievous were the complaints which the weaker party alleged against the dominant religion, and many times they had appealed to Henry IV. for protection and for fair treat-

ment. That easy-going monarch, who stood in great need of papal favours, one of them being a divorce from a wife whose life was as loose as her husband's, had no wish to involve himself with the Catholics, and he kept delaying until the Protestants were desperate. Three of their ablest leaders, followed by their forces, withdrew from Henry's army at a time when he could not spare them, and refused to serve him further until their liberties were secured.

It was under this pressure that the Edict of Nantes was issued, — a fact not often stated in history.

Henry being dead, and a Jesuit in secret control, Protestant alliances were dropped, and the regent entered into close relations with Spain. The Protestants were alarmed, and felt the necessity of organizing to resist threatened attack.

In the little kingdom of Béarn, the Protestant worship had long enjoyed exclusive legal sanction, under a decree of the mother of Henry IV., the celebrated Jeanne d'Albret, who had been queen of Béarn.

Henry IV. had never seen fit to reverse his mother's policy, but, in 1617, Maria de' Medici reëstablished the Catholic religion in Béarn, and ordered the restitution of church property. The Protestants bitterly resented this decree. They wanted to keep the property they had taken from the Catholics, and they did not want religious toleration in Béarn, — except for themselves.

Louis XIII. therefore had to enter Béarn with an army in 1621, to enforce his mother's decree of 1617.

This invasion aroused the Protestants, not only of Béarn, but of the whole kingdom. A general assembly convened at Rochelle, issued a declaration of defiance, levied troops, and chose the Duke de Rohan commander. A.D. 1621

De Luynes, who had been made constable of France, marched with 15,000 men against the Protestant city of Montauban, besieged it, failed to take it, was seized himself with a fever, and died December, 1621.

A.D. 1622 The war continued till October, 1622, when a treaty was made by which the Edict of Nantes was renewed; but the Protestants lost all their fortresses, save Montauban and Rochelle.

The king and his mother having become reconciled, the queen-mother testified her gratitude for the many services Richelieu had rendered her by obtaining for him the cardinal's hat and a seat in the Council of State.

A.D. 1624 Henceforth, until the day of his death, Cardinal Richelieu was the real king of France.

One of his first acts was to humble the Protestants. He made war upon them; besieged Rochelle once, and failed to take it; besieged it again two years later, and took it.

After the fall of Rochelle, the Protestants ceased to form a party, or to have any political influence. They were tolerated, as private individuals, in their form of worship and in their individual rights as citizens, but not allowed to hold general assemblies, nor to maintain their former organization.

The king and his advisers pretended to see in the Protestant assemblies and organizations something which savoured of a state within a state, and which, therefore, must not be tolerated. The Catholic assemblies and organizations, apparently, were things essentially different.

Richelieu set himself to humble the nobles, and when he got through hanging, beheading, imprisoning, and

making war upon them, they were in a fine frame of mind to become the dutiful courtiers who fawned around Louis XIV. To go into all these details of plots and counter-plots, petty wars and state trials, the beheading of this noble and the hanging of that, the confiscation of this dukedom and the seizure of that, would require a separate volume.

In spite of plot after plot to take his life, Richelieu lived and did his great work — the king being little more than an intelligent and sometimes resolute figurehead.

As proof of Richelieu's iron will, consider his conduct upon the subject of duelling. The practice had become a mania. Men fought to the death upon the flimsiest pretexts. Professional duellists, expert in the use of the sword, frequently took advantage of the code of honour, to murder men whom they hated. In 1609 it was estimated that in the previous eighteen years 4000 gentlemen had lost their lives in fighting duels.

Richelieu wished to put down the practice, and secured a royal decree forbidding it on penalty of death.

The gallants of the court thought but lightly of this decree; and very soon, the Count de Bouteville and the Count de les Chapelles fought a duel; whereupon Richelieu hanged them both by the neck until they were dead.

In consequence of this, there was a sudden scarcity of duels; and this scarcity lasted as long as Richelieu breathed.

The moment he was dead, there being no strong hand like his to take up the work where he had left off, duels again multiplied, so that between 1643 and 1654, 940 gentlemen were killed.

In 1630 came the clash between Richelieu and Maria

A.D. 1630 de' Medici, by whose favour he had become cardinal and ruler, and Richelieu left the court, thinking the king would take his mother's part. Louis XIII., however, had never loved his mother, and while he did not love Richelieu, he appreciated his genius, and, perhaps, feared it.

At any rate, he banished his mother, and recalled Richelieu. From then to the time of her death, the cardinal and the king followed the unlovable widow of the great Henry with unrelenting hate. She became a wanderer and a fugitive, beating her way drearily from the cold farewell of one foreign court to the chilly welcome of another. Without power or influence, without money or friends, without youth or hope, the royal outcast finally made her haven in the house of a shoemaker at Cologne, in which the painter Rubens had been born sixty years before. There, in a garret, deserted by all save one servant, and partly dependent upon charity for food and shelter, this daughter of the Duke of Florence, this widow of one king and mother of another, died like any other poor old cast-off, weather-beaten, heavy-hearted daughter of Eve.

After her death, her son, King Louis XIII., suddenly remembered that he owed her some filial care, and he had her corpse transported from the distant Rhine to the Seine, and gave it a magnificent funeral.

Like all great rulers Richelieu had an instinctive hatred of anarchy, and a constant craving for law, order, and system. He had seen France a prey to factions, and he set himself to the task of humbling these factions. He was no democrat, no lover of the people, no apostle of the brotherhood of man; his hatred of the nobles grew out of the fact that their power reduced the king to help-

lessness, the State to impotence. To make France strong at home and respected abroad, he felt that there must be a weakening of the nobles and a strengthening of the king, so that the might of the great nation could be wielded with unity of purpose.

The power of the nobles rested upon several foundations: 1st, they were local governors of their home provinces; 2d, they were practically exempt from taxation; 3d, they enjoyed social privileges as a class which lifted them above the common people, while their dwellings were so many fortresses within which they could shelter themselves, defy the government, and resist an army; and 4th, they almost monopolized the land, which at that time was the most important form of wealth.

It was not within the power nor the design of Richelieu to take away the riches of the nobles, their social supremacy, or their exemption from taxation. He cared nothing for the masses of the people, and the privileges of the nobles were not obnoxious to him unless they came into conflict with the preëminence of the king. To the extent that the remains of the feudal system interfered with the central authority, the absolutism of royalty, Richelieu determined to undermine and destroy them.

In 1626 he ordered the dismantling of all the fortified castles in France, and they were speedily demolished.

Even the iron will of Richelieu, however, shrank from a direct attack upon the nobles as local magistrates. The chief provinces were divided among nineteen governors, all belonging to the highest rank of the nobility. They regarded their offices as their private property, and administered them accordingly. A direct assault upon them by Richelieu would have produced civil war. Now

and then he could afford to prosecute one of them separately for disobedience and treason, and thus secure his condemnation to death, but this did not change the system.

To effect his purpose, Richelieu made permanent and systematic the appointment of royal intendants to supervise local affairs, which authority until his time had only been occasionally and temporarily exercised. Under the great cardinal, these intendants, owing their appointment directly to the crown and solely responsible to the king, gradually seized upon the entire local administration of justice, police, and finance.

Before the nobles fully comprehended the effect of this policy, their power as local governors was gone. They were allowed to retain their dignity and their revenues, but the substantial authority passed into the hands of middle-class officials, who were chosen by the crown from the middle class because such men would have neither the means nor the inclination to resist the king.

So rapidly did these intendants centre all administrative affairs in their own hands that John Law could truthfully declare, in the next century, "France is governed by thirty intendants."

Richelieu suppressed the ancient offices of constable and admiral, because they gave to the holders more power than could be safely trusted to a subject.

Pursuing the same policy of making the king an absolute monarch, Richelieu also suppressed, as far as possible, various local exemptions and privileges which several of the provinces of France had hitherto enjoyed.

As the capstone of the new administrative machine, Richelieu formed councils of the great officers of the

crown, each council being charged with the affairs of a certain department. Out of the special employees trained to service in these councils the intendants were always selected.

Above these ordinary councils rose the royal council, or Cabinet, over which the king himself presided. The chief officers of State were usually, but not always, the members of the Cabinet. The king often appointed men who held no other office.

This Cabinet wielded vast powers. It quashed the decisions of ordinary courts, adjudicated cases itself, appointed extraordinary judicial commissions, issued edicts which became laws when Parliament registered them, made war and peace, controlled the taxes, and supervised all other administrative bodies.

In reality, however, all this power was vested solely in the king. The Cabinet could advise, but the decision, absolute and irresistible, was with him.

Thus it will be seen that local affairs were controlled by intendants who had been trained in the royal councils and were the creatures of the royal will, while national affairs were controlled by councils made up of appointees of the king, whose powers were merely advisory. The king was lord of all. Nowhere did the people get hearing or representation. They elected nobody, controlled nobody, were consulted by nobody. Whatever the government might please to do for them it could do; they could do nothing for themselves. They had no power of initiative, nor of resistance. In the States General they might be represented, might find a voice, obtain a hearing, agitate grievances, and demand reforms; but the States General could not meet of its own motion. It was a body which

only existed when the king summoned it, and under the system of Richelieu it was well understood that the States General was nevermore to be summoned.

The strength and the weakness of the cunning machine of absolutism which Richelieu slowly and arduously put together will appear as this narrative proceeds. Its strength lay in the wonderful grandeur to which it lifted the king; its weakness in the manner in which it crippled the progress of the masses and kept them repressed. Even under Louis XV., the system was so strong that it held together of its own inherent stability — one piece of the structure supporting another, and giving convincing evidence of the skill of the workman who had contrived it. Its weakness appeared, again, when Louis XVI. let down the flood-gates by summoning the States General. Even then the genius of Richelieu triumphed, for the Revolution has not changed the centralized system which the great statesman constructed; the king is no longer the head of it, but otherwise the system of internal administration is much the same.

When Richelieu came into office the kingdom had no navy worth the mention. In times of war it hired vessels from private citizens. In his siege of Rochelle, Richelieu was forced to borrow ships from England and Holland.

Owing to his energetic attention to the naval interest of France, her fleet at the time of his death consisted of fifty-six men of war, and her naval defences had been immensely strengthened. He created the port of Brest, encouraged the merchant marine, and spared no pains to extend French colonization.

While an ardent Catholic in his domestic policy, Riche-

lieu was, first of all a Frenchman, in foreign affairs. Believing it to be for the interest of France to curb the power of Austria, he allied himself with the Protestants who were at war with her, and rendered them powerful aid in money and men. Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant king of Sweden, had the support of Richelieu in his invasion of Germany; and when that great warrior fell, in the hour of victory at Lützen, France took Sweden's place in the war.

In like manner he waged war against Spain, humbled her, and despoiled her to build up France.

But while Richelieu did so much for the crown at home and abroad, he neglected the well-being of the French people.

He gave no encouragement to agriculture or manufactures. He made no attempt to unfetter internal trade from the monopoly of the guilds, or the customs duties which one province and one town levied against another. He did not put a stop to the sale of offices, to the farming out of the taxes, or to the salt monopoly. He made no effort to equalize the burdens of government, reduce expenses, abolish exemptions, lower taxes, or put the national finances in order. In fact, his financial administration was wretched. He winked at official corruption, let a yearly deficit grow, made no effort to cure the disorder, but seemed rather to favour it.

He said that the people should be heavily taxed to keep them humble, and that if they had freedom from taxes they would soon want freedom from kings.

The public burdens were very great, and there were riots in Paris and the provinces; but the troops were used promptly, and the disturbances harshly quelled. At his

death it was found that he had spent the national revenues for three years to come.

It was under Richelieu that the French Academy was incorporated by letters patent, drawn up in 1635, and published in 1637.

It was also under Richelieu that the first newspaper received sanction and encouragement. Hitherto the only such thing in France had been an annual. This Once-a-year, being a somewhat sluggish news-vender even for those times, little handbills containing news items began to circulate. A Dr. Renaudot, in 1631, secured a license from Richelieu to publish a regular weekly newspaper, and thus was founded *The Gazette* of France. It was very modest, consisting of four pages, each containing a single column.

Louis XIII. was a frequent contributor to this first of newspapers, and took a special pleasure in the work. The great cardinal also wrote for it, his weakness being a fondness for literary composition.

With all his will-power and sternness, Richelieu was keenly sensitive to public opinion. His spies lurked everywhere, listening to what was said, in order to report it to the lonely despot who sat far within his great palace, suspicious, crafty, unloving, bent by toil and care and disease, but watchful of every pulse-beat of the kingdom whose master he had come to be.

With the quick intuition of genius it occurred to Richelieu that these newspapers could be used as powerful levers to move and mould public opinion. Hence he sanctioned them, wrote for them, and encouraged the king to write for them.

Ah, the frailty of human wisdom, be it never so wise !

Richelieu had worked all his life through peril and crime and every imaginable obstacle to build a mighty fabric of absolutism, and here he was fathering the newspaper, — the dynamite that was to shiver his absolutism from turret to foundation stone!

As poor Louis XVI. saw his throne reeling from the incessant battering of newspapers, did it ever enter his dull head that his great-great-grandfather had also great-great-grandfathered these same newspapers?

Richelieu died in December, 1642, victorious at home and abroad. Under his administration the principalities of Roussillon and of Sedan had been added to France, and her armies had won important victories in Spain, Italy, and Germany. So completely was his masterful influence established that even after his death the minister he had recommended was chosen as his successor, and his policy faithfully carried out as long as the king lived. A.D. 1642

Louis XIII. died of consumption in the forty-third year of his age, six months after the great cardinal who had so greatly overshadowed the gloomy, jealous, irresolute, and incapable monarch, that he is only remembered as the background which furnishes a contrast for the daring genius, the tireless energy, and the imperial will of Richelieu. A.D. 1643

CHAPTER XXXI

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH

THE late king had married a daughter of Philip III. of Spain; she is known to history as Anne of Austria.

She had not won the love or the confidence of her royal spouse, and for twenty-two years she continued childless, avoided by Louis and isolated by Richelieu.

Yielding to the advice of Mlle. de la Fayette, whom his pressing and dishonourable suit had driven into a convent, the king took advantage of the excuse afforded him by the sudden coming up of a storm while he was in the vicinity of the queen's residence, to take shelter therein for the night.

In due time thereafter a boy was born, who was advanced enough at the time of his father's last illness to style himself "Louis XIV." in his parent's presence. "Not yet, my son, not yet," said the dying king softly.

But the distrust with which Louis XIII. had so long regarded his wife did not leave him entirely, and by a last will and testament he had sought to tie her hands as regent. She and her immediate partisans not being disposed to submit to these limitations upon her authority, Parliament was appealed to, just as it had been appealed to at the beginning of the preceding reign. The lawyers were eager enough to assume political powers, and they sustained Anne of Austria just as they had sustained

A.D. 1643

Maria de' Medici. At a subsequent period this assertion of political power became most inconvenient to the sovereign, and the lawyers were asked to let state affairs alone.

Cardinal Mazarin, the trusted pupil of Richelieu, was chosen by the regent as her chief counsellor. He became in fact the master of France; and considering the fact that they lived together, it may be inferred that he and the queen-mother were husband and wife.

The grandees, led by the Duke of Vendôme, the son of Henry IV. by Gabrielle d'Estrées, thought it a favourable time to attempt the recovery of the ground they had lost under Richelieu, and began to cause trouble.

The malcontents were banished from court, and engaged in conspiracies which soon led to civil war.

The Spaniards, emboldened by the death of Richelieu, had laid siege to Rocroi.

Mazarin was determined to follow up the policy of his great predecessor, and to humble the House of Austria.

The great Condé began his career by winning, at the age of twenty-one, the battle of Rocroi over the Spaniards, and driving them out of France.

Condé was the son of the beautiful Charlotte de Montmorency, whose perfect face and figure had so completely caught the roving fancy of Henry IV.

After the brilliant service just mentioned, Condé joined Turenne in Germany, where they inflicted a crushing defeat on the imperial forces at Nördlingen. In 1646 Condé beseiged and took Dunkirk. A.D. 1645 and 1646

Turenne's campaign was also successful, and Vienna was only saved from falling into his hands by a sudden rise in the river Inn.

The Peace of Westphalia (1648) put an end to hostil-

A.D. 1648 ities, and thus a religious war which had raged more or less furiously for sixty years came to an end.

By the Treaty of Westphalia, the House of Austria not only recognized liberty of conscience in Germany, but she was likewise forced to recognize the political independence of the German princes. Within their own dominions these petty rulers demanded and obtained full sovereignty, and the right to contract foreign alliances was also conceded to them.

In this manner the glory passed away from the German Empire. Nothing but a shadow was left.

Supremacy in Europe was now transferred to France. In course of time she was to lose it, as the House of Austria had lost it, — by embarking upon vast schemes of aggrandizement, and allowing the clergy too much influence in affairs of State.

By the Treaty of Westphalia, also, Alsace was ceded to France in full sovereignty, and the upper Rhine fell under French control.

While her interests in foreign affairs had been prospering in this substantial manner, France was torn by faction at home. Internal affairs were badly managed; Mazarin was poor, and had his fortune to make; his relatives were poor, and had *their* fortunes to make.

To comfort these adventurers, millions of public moneys were required.

Then again, the nobles were discontented at the diminution of their ancient feudal importance, and they exacted a great deal of nursing financially.

Added to these sources of embarrassment was the wholesale and scientific pillage practised by the farmers of the taxes. The foreign war had been necessarily expensive, and

thus, with war abroad, and thieving at home, the treasury was piteously drained.

Credit was so low that loans could not be made for less than twenty-five per cent.

Public dues were only paid in part, taxes were vigorously collected, new offices were created and sold to the highest bidder, and fines levied under obsolete laws.

The Parliament of Paris took the lead of the malcontents, influenced, perhaps, by the fight which the British Parliament was then waging against the Stuarts.

Except in name there was no similarity between the two parliaments.

In England the Parliament was the people, assembled by representatives, and clothed with legislative power.

In France the Parliament was a court of law, composed of men who had bought their offices, and clothed with no legislative power whatever. But, without having any distinct legal right to do so, the lawyers had fallen into the habit of protesting against bad laws and royal encroachments; and, out of this habit, we shall see a revolution grow in course of time.

The reforms demanded of the regent by the Parliament of Paris were set forth in twenty-seven articles, which were offered for the royal sanction, in order that they might become the law of the kingdom.

It was asked that thereafter no taxes should be collected unless they had first been discussed and voted on by the Parliament; the intendants, or overseers, appointed by the crown, were to be abolished, and local affairs given back to local control; writs of arbitrary arrest, called lettres de cachet, were to be suppressed, and the right of speedy trial given to prisoners. A.D. 1648

Mazarin had not the faintest idea of allowing changes of this radical character in the old system under which he was prospering, and he took advantage of the enthusiasm created by the military victories in Germany to order the arrest of three of the most prominent members of the Parliament.

This was the spark in the powder-house, and a popular explosion followed. The people of Paris flew to arms, the shops were shut, chains drawn across the streets, barricades thrown up, and half a million patriots were shouting "Liberty and Broussel" around the palace,—Broussel being one of the three whose arrest had been ordered, and whose servant had been bold enough to make a row over the question.

Mazarin and the queen mother gave in; and the reforms demanded were promised in writing by the regent. Peace at once followed.

But Mazarin had only yielded in order to gain time. As soon as the foreign war was off his hands he intended to crush the factions. In February, 1649, the court left Paris for Ruel and troops were collected. The Parliament called in the aid of the discontented grandees and thus commenced the strangest civil war on record. It is known in history as the war of the Fronde—*fronde* being the name of a child's sling.

It was a war in which there was more confusion than fighting, more intrigue than bloodshed, more universal discontent than specific purpose, a war in which the masses who followed the rebel leaders wanted one thing, and the leaders quite another.

A.D. 1649 In this war of the Fronde we see the Prince of Condé, a member of the royal family, playing the part of a rebel

chief, and Cardinal de Retz trying to outplot Cardinal Mazarin; we see Paris take sides first with the government, and then with the rebels; we see Marshal Turenne meeting Condé in pitched battle at the gates of Paris; we see the Great Mademoiselle, daughter of the king's uncle, directing the cannon of the Bastille upon the king's troops; we see Mazarin fleeing from the kingdom to far Cologne, and from that remote region still pulling the wires which direct the movements of the regent; and we see, toward the end, that nearly all the prominent leaders have changed sides completely before the situation clears.

Condé was for the court at first, fought its battles, and won them; but, growing too arrogant, as Mazarin thought, he was arrested, and kept in prison thirteen months. Released by the queen mother, he remained surly and soon revolted. Having fought Turenne, and gained possession of Paris, he soon lost control of the turbulent populace, and left his country in disgust. Joining the Spaniards, he made war upon the French, was tried in his absence, and condemned to death. He was afterwards defeated by Turenne at the battle of the Dunes; and, when peace was made between France and Spain, his pardon was made a condition by the Spaniards, and was reluctantly granted by the French.

Turenne, on the other hand, at first joined the rebels and commanded their army; then he went over to the government, and was given command of its army.

The government itself was first on one side and then the other. First it sued for peace and granted the reforms — Mazarin taking himself off to Cologne. Then it suddenly plucks up courage, Mazarin comes hurrying home, Turenne takes command of the royal forces, the

battle of St. Antoine is fought between Turenne and
A.D. 1652 Condé, the latter enters Paris, seemingly victorious, and royalty is apparently lost — when Condé waxes wroth about something else, sulks off to Spain, and rebellion finds itself without competent leadership. Royalty, so recently in gloom, once more basks in sunshine. The young king and the royal family, escorted
A.D. 1653 by Turenne and the army, makes a triumphant entry into Paris, and the hurly-burly of the Fronde is over.

There is one explanation which accounts for the endless confusion of this singular war. It is this: the grandees who led the rebels wished to recover the feudal powers and properties they had lost under Richelieu, while the mass of the rebels thought of establishing checks both upon the grandees and the king. There being hopeless want of consistency in the motives which actuated the rebels and their leaders, there was naturally a want of coherence in the rebellion.

A.D. 1655 to 1658 The civil war being ended, Mazarin now gave the Spaniards his attention. Turenne led the French army, and led it to victory. The Spaniards, despite the generalship of Condé, were beaten and sued for peace. One
A.D. 1659 of the articles of the treaty which followed provided for the marriage of the young king of France to Maria Theresa, daughter of the king of Spain.

This marriage took place, accordingly, in June, 1660.

The Treaty of the Pyrenees, which brought peace to France and Spain, was highly advantageous to France and marked a corresponding decline in the power of the house of Austria.

Mazarin, who was perhaps the most supple, most ava-

ricious, and most unscrupulous politician France ever had, remained master of the government until his death, March 8, 1661.

His little savings amounted to 100,000,000 francs, and the legacy he left to France was a public debt of 430,000,000 francs.

Louis XIV. at once took the reins of government in his own hands, announced that he would be his own minister, reduced his councillors to the position of mere clerks, worked eight hours every day on the business of State, made his personal will the law of the kingdom, and believed he uttered the simplest of truisms when he said, "I am the State." A.D. 1661

Heredity does much; training does more; and the atmosphere in which we live does more than both combined. Philip II. of Spain kidnaps the infant son of William of Orange, a man doubly hated for being both rebel and Protestant. The boy is carried to Spain, is trained and taught by priests, breathes the very essence of Catholicism year in and year out; sees through Catholic eyes, hears through Catholic ears, judges by Catholic standards; and at length, when he is set free to go back to Holland, he is a Catholic of Catholics—hating heretics as intensely as Philip hated them.

Louis XIV., about whose monstrous conception of his own prerogatives so much has been said, was but a similar example of what can be done by training. Heredity drove him toward absolutism, education saturated him with it, and the atmosphere of adulation in which he lived deepened the illusion.

At heart no worse, perhaps, than the average man, in mind very much above the average, this monarch lived

to do France an amount of evil which the worst of men could not have surpassed, and to lead her into follies which the blindest stupidity could not have rivalled.

Louis XIV. actually believed that France was as much his own individual estate as he believed that the royal palace was his own individual dwelling; God had given him the crown, the kingdom, and the people. Of this he was sure, and nothing ever occurred to shake his faith. Some shadowy notions he had about the property having been given to him in trust, but the execution of the trust was a matter which lay between him and God. Parliaments had no voice in it. The people had nothing to do with it. Even the grandees — although in his splendid way he bade them come to his court and shine as lesser luminaries around himself, the central sun — were made to understand that they drew all their radiance from him, the source of the light, he being the fountain-head of honour, power, and privilege.

Louis was twenty-three years old when Mazarin died. France at this time enjoyed peace; the government was strongly centralized, and the young monarch could wield the whole strength of the State without hindrance from any source; his army was commanded by Condé and Turenne, the first generals of the age.

Louis' position, in comparison with that of his neighbours, was one of preëminence, and he felt it.

Between the ambassadors of France and those of Spain there had long been a dispute as to precedence. That is, the French ambassadors claimed the right to go before those of Spain upon state occasions, in court ceremonials, and so forth. The Spaniards did not concede this claim, and the consequence was that strife broke

out between the diplomatic representatives of the two kingdoms. Unseemly wrangles embroiled the courts to which they were accredited; and, over this squabble as to which of two men should walk in front of the other, two great nations were about to go to war.

An acute crisis in the dispute occurred in London. A.D. 1661 Louis XIV. directed his ambassador to seize the first place at the next public ceremonial, and to hold it. These instructions became known. The French prepared to enforce their claim to precedence, the Spaniards to resist it.

The next court ceremony happened to be the reception of the ambassador of Sweden. The French gathered a force of five hundred men; the Spaniards also assembled in large numbers. Then came the tug of war over the great question whose coach should come next to that of the English king, Charles II.

A street fight followed, and the French were worsted. The horses drawing the coach of the French ambassador were killed, and also some of his attendants. The Spanish ambassador, swelling with pride, followed next to the coach of the king, fifty professional fighters, with swords bare and ready for business, keeping guard; all London looking on and applauding, for the French were not loved in London.

When the incident became known in Paris, Louis was beside himself with rage. The Spanish ambassador at the French court was immediately dismissed. Peremptory demand was made upon the king of Spain for satisfaction. That aged person was feeble in body, feeble in mind, and feeble in military resources. His son-in-law, Louis XIV., was well aware of the facts.

A.D. 1662 Spain had to yield, to avoid a war she was not prepared to meet. The Spanish ambassador at London was recalled and disgraced. A special envoy of Spain was sent to France to apologize. In presence of the whole court and the entire diplomatic body, the Spanish envoy expressed the regrets of the king of Spain for what had occurred, and promised that thenceforth no Spanish envoy should presume to go in front of the representatives of France. From that good hour until doomsday, it was respectfully promised the French monarch that Spain should walk behind.

Next year there came another fine opportunity for Louis XIV. to browbeat a potentate weaker than himself.

A brawl having occurred in the streets of Rome between the Corsican guard of the Pope and some retainers of the French ambassador, the palace of the latter was A.D. 1663 attacked, and several of the French killed. The Pope refused to punish the aggressors. Louis sent the papal nuncio off to the frontier under military guard, and prepared an army of 24,000 men to march upon Rome. The Parliament of Paris declared Avignon reunited to France, and the Sorbonne declared that the Pope was not infallible after all, and that he should not intermeddle with the temporal affairs of kings.

In September, 1663, the advance guard of the French army crossed the Alps; the main body was to follow in the early spring.

The Pope had all along been deluding himself. He had supposed that Louis was too good a Catholic to draw sword on the Holy Father. But while Louis loved the Church well, he loved the State better yet, for he, Louis, was the State. The Pope had also be-

lieved that the Catholic princes and peoples would rise up and defend the successor of St. Peter. But the princes and peoples did not rise.

Therefore, Alexander VII. found himself confronting, alone, an angry king whose subjects had been shot down in violation of law, and whose demand for redress had been contemptuously denied.

Thereupon the Pope yielded to inexorable facts, apologized for the wrong, dismissed his Corsican guard, promised that nevermore would he employ Corsicans in the papal government, and erected a monument in the streets of Rome upon which he caused to be inscribed the story of the quarrel and the manner of its settlement.

The Pope's nephew, Cardinal Chigi, was sent to Paris, furthermore, to express to Louis, publicly, the Pope's regrets for the late difficulty and for the incident which had caused it; and to assure the pompous young monarch of the Holy Father's love and distinguished consideration.

Then, and not till then, did his Holiness obtain forgiveness, and the restoration of Avignon.

These bloodless triumphs over Philip IV. of Spain, and Alexander VII., — two elderly gentlemen who had little spirit, less health, and insufficient troops, — made a great stir throughout Europe, and gave Louis XIV. a commanding influence. His neighbours began to dread his ambition and to fear his power.

He had already, in 1662, bought from that contemptible king, Charles II., the city of Dunkirk, which the strong hand of Cromwell had added to the possessions of England. The price was 5,000,000 livres. The place was at once fortified, and has remained a French city ever since.

A.D. 1665 In September, 1665, Philip IV. of Spain died, and was succeeded by his son, Charles II., a child four years old. He was too weak to stand alone, had neither teeth nor hair, and could not hold his head up. This puny representative of divine right was solemnly acknowledged as monarch of a realm which stretched all over the world. The foreign ambassadors ceremoniously visited his puling Majesty, and formally made their little speeches of congratulation to him, his nurse holding the king in his chair while this courtly farce was being acted.

If the fetich worshippers of Darkest Africa, naked barbarians that they are, could witness some of our civilized customs and ceremonials, they would not doubt the brotherhood of man, for while our civilization takes on much varnish, we at heart remain faithful to the fetich worship of our heathen forefathers. We make unto ourselves idols, graven images, and Mumbo-Jumbo gods out of bright cloth and waving feathers, and before these hand-made gods we fall down upon our faces — humbly thanking them for allowing us to live.

The wife of Louis XIV. was the daughter of Philip IV. by his first wife. According to a custom which prevailed among private individuals in parts of the Spanish Low Countries, Brabant, Hainault, and Flanders, now Belgium, the children of a first marriage inherited, in preference to those of a second.

Claiming that this custom applied to kingdoms as well as to farms and cattle, Louis demanded that the Spanish Low Countries be surrendered to him. His demand having been denied, he sent 50,000 troops under the great Turenne to take possession of the property in dispute. The Spaniards were totally unprepared to

A.D. 1667

resist. The French took city after city, with ease and despatch. Louis himself followed the campaign, with a gorgeous train of carriages, containing his brilliantly dressed courtiers, his two beautiful mistresses, and his meek, dutiful, and adoring queen, to give the glory of his presence to this splendid military parade. The natural consequence of this demonstration was that Louis' neighbours grew more jealous and uneasy than ever. Holland adjoined the Spanish Low Countries, and the Dutch began to ask themselves where the French monarch meant to stop. The question having grown more pressing as the invasion came nearer and nearer to their frontier, these practical Dutch politely requested Louis to state what would satisfy his demands in that particular quarter of the globe.

In reply, he said he would accept in full of all his claims the territory which he had already seized; or that he would take, in lieu thereof, the province of Franche-Comté.

With some slight changes, the Dutch were content with these terms, but Spain was not. So the war went on.

A Triple Alliance was formed between England, Holland, and Sweden to enforce peace. Spain then saw the necessity of submitting. Louis obtained the territory occupied by his troops, just as he had been willing to do previous to the formation of the Triple Alliance. Although his troops under Condé had already overrun Franche-Comté before Spain agreed to sign the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Louis gave up all his conquests, excepting those in the Spanish Low Countries. A.D. 1668

The French king, however, was angry with the Dutch. They had ignored the fact that France had aided Holland

(very slightly) in her recent struggle with England. They had presumed to quit their alliance with him, and to combine with England and Sweden to compel him to accept terms he had offered to accept without compulsion. Moreover, they had abused him in their newspapers, and had caused a medal to be struck in which the Dutch were represented as stopping the onward career of the sun, Louis XIV. Besides, the Dutch were Protestants, republicans, and mere merchants. Their insolence was not to be borne. With one voice, the silken courtiers, who hovered round Louis and burnt incense before him both day and night, clamorously demanded the punishment of these pestiferous Dutch.

During four years preparations were made to destroy the Dutch Republic. Charles II. of England was bribed out of the Triple Alliance, and into a compact with Louis. By a secret article of the treaty between these two kings, Charles promised to profess himself openly a Catholic, and Louis agreed to pay him 2,000,000 livres and to furnish him with 6000 Catholic troops to put down any disturbance the Protestants of England might make in consequence of his change of religion. Louis also bought off Sweden, and secured the neutrality of the German princes in the same manner. Two of the German potentates who had to be approached were the bishops of Münster and of Strasbourg. They revelled in the opportunity, rejoicing that they had something to sell which the richest monarch in Europe wanted to buy. Louvois, the War Minister of Louis, grumbled that he had to lose a whole day in the negotiation because the bishops "got so drunk overnight celebrating the situation that they could do no business" the following day.

But in due time the bishops grew sober, the price of their neutrality was agreed on, and the money paid.

The Dutch were now isolated, they were to breast the storm alone; and the fate of Holland — the gallant little country which Dutch labour had wrenched from the sea, and which Dutch courage had held against all the hosts of Spain, led by Don John of Austria, Alva, and Parma — seemed to be sealed at last.

In Holland, at this time, the chief magistrate, known as the Grand Pensionary, was John de Witt. This wise republican had foreseen the troubles which were coming upon the Spanish Low Countries, and had suggested a plan of settlement. After centuries of bloodshed, the plan he proposed was substantially that upon which a settlement has been reached, but it was rejected at the time, and the storm gathered. De Witt had warned his countrymen against the English alliance. He had no faith in Charles II., and he knew that Holland's appearance in a hostile coalition against France would provoke the wrath of the proud and powerful Louis.

De Witt was overruled; the alliance with England was formed, the resentment of the French king thereby aroused; and Holland was deserted by Charles II. in the hour of her need.

The Dutch, finding themselves threatened by the whole weight of Louis' power, and without a friend in all the world, were deeply penitent and sincerely scared. They sent a trembling deputation to Paris, whose delegates bent in the dust before the mighty Louis, and sought to avert his wrath. They were rudely rebuffed. They then turned to England, and prayed her to keep her faith as pledged in the Triple Alliance.

Charles II. had no love for the Dutch. He had spent in Holland some of the wretched days of his exile, and had met little favour there. It now pleased him to be royally insolent to the Dutch deputation, and to send it away in despair.

A.D. 1672 In May, 1672, Louis poured an army of 100,000 men into Holland, while the English attacked the Dutch on the sea. The country seemed doomed. City after city surrendered to the French, the Rhine was forded, and Amsterdam itself would have fallen but for the delays of the invaders.

In June the States General of Holland made the most humiliating offers to secure peace. They proposed to give up one-third of their country, and to pay 10,000,000 livres to reimburse Louis his expenses. Their offers were insultingly rejected.

Louis demanded that they should surrender more than one-third of their country, pay 24,000,000 livres indemnity; allow the Catholic religion to be exercised in that portion of their country which he would permit them to keep, support the Catholic priests by salaries paid by the State; and, finally, to send to Paris, once a year, a solemn embassy, which should present a medal engraved with the thanks of the Dutch to him for having restored peace to their country.

These insulting terms drove the Dutch to desperation. The national spirit rose. Death seemed preferable to such dishonour. Having no armies to summon, they called upon the sea. The dykes were cut, the country flooded, and the French were halted in mid-career.

One great crime the desperate Dutch committed. They turned against John de Witt, the patriot and statesman,

and tore him to pieces in the streets. They laid to his door all the misfortunes which had come upon them, being specially angry, doubtless, because of the fact that they had gone into the English alliance in opposition to his advice.

William of Orange now became the leader of the Dutch. To his patient, persistent hatred of Louis, his rare skill in setting other princes against the French monarch, and, above all, to his wonderful capacity to take defeat after defeat until he wore out the victors who beat him, Holland owed her salvation.

By the cutting of the dykes a large portion of Holland had been given back to the ocean. In those portions of the country where the French held possession, hideous atrocities were committed. A.D. 1673 to 1678

Writing to the Minister of War, the following report was made by Marshal Luxembourg: —

"M. de Maqueline was obliged to burn a village. Horses and cattle were burned, and they say plenty of peasants, women, and children."

Writing to the Prince of Condé, he said, "The soldiers roasted all the Dutch in the village of Swammerdam; they did not let one escape."

Remember that this is the exultant language of a great French captain, writing to other high officials.

William of Orange, in the meantime, was not idle. To all the courts of Europe he sent deputations, asking aid.

Europe slowly responded. The German emperor, the elector of Brandenburg, the king of Spain, and finally England, all took the side of Holland. Sweden, alone, aided France.

In 1674 the French withdrew from Holland, and the man-hunt rolled off to the Rhine, and to Flanders. Again Franche-Comté was occupied by Louis, and many towns in the Spanish Low Countries fell into his hands.

But at last the French monarch yearned for peace, and his pride was not so great but that he was willing to make concessions to the despised Dutch in order to get it.

He agreed to reduce the heavy tariff which he had laid upon Dutch imports and to remove other trade restrictions to which they objected. These concessions soothed the rich merchants of Holland, and they inclined their hearts to peace.

Not so William of Orange. He still wanted war. Louis tried to conciliate him and win him over, but without success. The indomitable man actually attacked the French army after he learned that peace had already been made. He hoped to win a victory, and thus keep the war going on. It required six hours of desperate fighting to beat him off. This unjustifiable act, resulting in the loss of 2000 lives, is a stain upon his memory.

A.D. 1678 The day after this bloody repulse, William received official notice from the States General of Holland that the Treaty of Nimeguen had been signed.

France kept Franche-Comté, which has ever since been hers, and, by retaining twelve places along the Netherlands frontier, fixed her northern boundary substantially where it now lies. Louis XIV. gave way to the Dutch on the question of the tariff duty, and the brave little republic upon whose ruin Louis had concentrated all his strength, came out of the struggle without the loss of any valuable territory.

Whatever glory there was in the contest remained with Holland, and her people celebrated their triumphant resistance to foreign invasion with justifiable enthusiasm. Not only had they put the first decisive check upon Louis' ambition, but in William of Orange they had furnished the leader whose policy of uniting the rest of Europe against France was to humble the pride of Louis and bring his kingdom to the brink of ruin.

CHAPTER XXXII

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH (*continued*)

THE time, however, was yet far distant when the French king was to feel any humility. The Treaty of Nimeguen left him master of the situation, although he had not succeeded in his designs. His armies had been continuously victorious; they had only stopped in Holland when the water became too deep to wade. They could not drive back the North Sea at the point of the bayonet; neither could they spend a lifetime in repeatedly beating so tough a person as William of Orange.

Louis had made peace because he was weary of the expense and trouble of war; and because he saw that such victories as he had been winning over William and the Dutch were not worth the cost. So Louis majestically quit fighting and went back to join the ladies of his seraglio.

By the Treaty of Nimeguen the places ceded to France were specifically named, but it was further provided that "the dependencies" of the ceded territories were likewise to be her property.

What were these dependencies? Louis XIV., strong in his army of 140,000 men, began to examine the question, with an eye to further conquest. He established certain tribunals of his own to look into this matter of dependencies. Ancient documents were hunted up to

show that certain other places formerly belonged to the territories granted to Louis by the Treaty of Nimeguen. The statute of limitation was serenely ignored; adverse possession cut no figure at all. The French judges of the tribunals trying the question of dependencies knew what decisions Louis would expect, and with loyal readiness they passed upon each issue in a manner pleasing to the monarch.

By the decisions of this accommodating tribunal, supported as they were by the largest standing army that Europe had then seen, Louis gained twenty important cities which other princes and potentates had supposed for a number of years to be their own. Thus Sweden lost a slice of her territory; Spain was still further despoiled; and the German princes were deprived of considerable property in towns, cattle, and people, in a manner most abrupt and annoying.

The German Diet, seeing no end to the encroachments of a king who advanced upon his neighbours, backed by supple judges and irresistible troops, gravely asked of Louis that he should state how much he claimed and meant to take. By way of answer Louis said he intended to take all that the treaty gave him. His meaning probably was that he meant to take all that he could get; and the German Diet so understood him.

The reckless spirit of aggression which had seized the French monarch is well shown by the following incident.

Louvois, his Minister of War, began to fortify a piece of land in Germany which did not belong to France. The Germans protested against the seizure. Louvois wrote to the Parliament of Mentz to send him a decision covering the land in dispute, and to "date it back." The

obliging judges did as requested, duly certifying under their hands and seals that the decision was six years old. Louvois went forward with his fortifications, and the Germans were left to their reflections.

The city of Strasbourg was seized by the French army in
A.D. 1681 1681, some of the leading citizens having been handsomely bribed to open the gates and to favour French annexation.

In Italy the fortress of Casale was also occupied by the French, — after certain eminent persons had agreed upon its price.

General irritation was felt among the European princes at the steady advance of French dominion, and Spain, in a small way, began to fight. But she alone was no match for Louis, and the German emperor had as much war as he wished in resisting the Turks. England was kept quiet by pensions paid to Charles II.; and the rest of Europe was not yet ready to go into a bloody struggle with so powerful a king as Louis XIV.

He next turned his guns upon Genoa, once a powerful republic, but now a decayed state, drowsing along under a feeble doge.

A.D. It seems that the citizens of Genoa had criticised Louis
1684 with considerable freedom, and had dared to sell ships to the Spaniards and Algerines, with whom he was at enmity. Genoa was warned of the danger she incurred; she was ordered to quit building ships, and was told to pay to the descendant of a certain Genoese political offender the property which had belonged to his family a hundred years before, and to pay also to their descendant a hundred years' interest upon the claims.

Genoa, being a free and independent state, refused to comply with Louis' imperious demands.

The French fleet promptly appeared before the beautiful city, threw 10,000 bombs among her unprotected people, levelled the palaces of the rich and the huts of the poor, gave to the fire the homes of thousands of men who had committed no offence whatever against the French king, and bespattered the streets with the blood of helpless victims of insolent, deliberate, and imperial murder.

Genoa was almost demolished; the warehouses of her merchants, whose ships had sailed to the far East, went up in flames; and, by the glare of the burning buildings, the French in their ships far out at sea could read at night.

"The princes of Europe have learned that one does not offend with impunity the greatest monarch in the world."

In this braggart and heartless style did Louis XIV. comment on his cowardly attack upon a helpless foe.

But, although Genoa was in ashes, she was told that the French king, his Most Christian Majesty, was not yet ready to forgive her for her disobedience of his commands. He required that the doge should come to Paris, accompanied by the chief Genoese officials, and present a formal and public apology in behalf of their city. The Genoese law forbade the doge to leave the city; but he had to go, nevertheless, and present to the French monarch an elaborate apology in which Louis was assured that in valour, greatness, and magnanimity he excelled all the kings of whom history had made mention. Soothed by such abject submission to his royal will, Louis permitted what was left of Genoa to continue to exist.

The Duke of Savoy was treated in the same arrogant spirit. He wished to take a trip to Vienna, but the

French ambassador hinted to him that Louis would not like it, so the trip was abandoned; neither was he allowed to send an ambassador to Spain.

In the Alpine valleys of Savoy there lived some descendants of the ancient Waldenses or Vaudois. Louis XIV. ordered the Duke of Savoy to drive these people out from their homes, and to expel them from his dominions. The duke submitted, and ordered the Vaudois to leave. But Louis, distrusting the duke, sent French troops into Savoy to drive away the subjects of this independent prince.

The Vaudois bravely but fruitlessly resisted the French. Villages were burnt, men, women, and children butchered, and homes desolated. "Neither people nor animals are left," were the words in which the French commander officially reported to Louvois. "If the soldiers do not kill those who are taken with arms in their hands, they are sent to the hangman."

A few thousand prisoners were the only living remnant of a pastoral people whose only crime was that they worshipped God in a manner different from that prescribed by Louis.

At last all Europe was aroused against the intolerable pride, greed, and aggression of the king of France. In July, 1686, the League of Augsburg was formed against him by Spain, Sweden, the emperor of Germany, and most of the German princes. By his arbitrary imperiousness, Louis had profoundly angered both Catholics and Protestants.

He had offended the former by seizing the revenues of the Church, by putting a public humiliation upon the Holy Father, and by refusing to allow a reform of the

abuses of the right of asylum which ambassadors claimed at the papal court in Rome. The Pope was clearly in the right in wishing to accomplish the reform. This right of asylum had been greatly overstrained; the ambassadors not only claiming that persons domiciled in the legation were exempt from arrest, but that arrest could not be made in the immediate section of the city in which they condescended to live. The result was that nearly one-third of Rome was taken from the Pope's control and became a refuge for harlots, thieves, and murderers.

Louis XIV. not only refused his consent to the reform proposed by the Pope, but sent French troops to sustain the ambassador of France in maintaining privileges utterly destructive of the public peace, safety, and morality. A.D. 1687

But grievous as were the complaints of the Catholics against Louis XIV., what pen can draw the indictment which the Protestants brought against him?

He had been their enemy from the beginning. He had encroached upon their legal and natural right every year of his reign. He had deprived them of the security guaranteed them by his grandfather, Henry IV., in the Edict of Nantes; he had suppressed the mixed tribunals, half-Protestant and half-Catholic, which had been instituted for their protection; he had forbidden them to act as notaries, solicitors, advocates, printers, booksellers, physicians, surgeons, or apothecaries. He had thus closed all public offices and liberal professions to them. He had decreed that Protestant children, *seven years old and upwards*, might renounce the authority of their parents, choose their own guardians, and renounce the Protestant religion, thus giving to religious fanaticism a tremendous

weapon for the destruction of domestic peace in Protestant families. He had established missionary stations for the conversion of Protestants, and had fixed a scale of money payments for those who apostatized, and for those who effected the apostasy.

He had made the home of every respectable Protestant a hell to him by quartering soldiers in the house, — licentious brutes who, by day and by night, were encouraged by their officers to outrage every feeling of decency and modesty the father or the mother, the husband or the wife, the son or the daughter might have, — there being absolutely no escape for the victims of soldier insolence, violence, obscenity, and lust, except in turning to the state religion. Only by apostasy could Protestants escape the dragoons and the "dragonnades."

But even all this accumulation of wrong was not enough for Louis. On October 22, 1685, he formally revoked the Edict of Nantes.

All the privileges enjoyed by Protestants under Henry IV. and Louis XIII. were withdrawn. The public exercise of their worship was forbidden. Their ministers of the gospel were ordered to leave France within two weeks. The people were forbidden to follow their pastors on pain of confiscation of property and sentence to the galleys. The marriage of Protestants were declared null, and the children thereof illegitimate.

Persecutions were pressed savagely. Those convicted of being Protestants and refusing to become Catholics were cast into prison and their property confiscated.

Ministers of the gospel, wherever captured, after the two weeks allowed for escape, were put to death.

In spite of the penalties threatened, nearly a quarter of

a million Protestants fled from the country, using every kind of disguise to get across the frontier. Not only did these fugitives carry to foreign lands the arts and industries of France, not only did Louis drive from the looms and shops and foundries of his kingdom the best artisans of the world, but he drove into the armies of his bitterest enemies thousands of recruits who thenceforward fought him with a savage passion which nothing but death could chill. On many a bloody field, in his bleak latter years, Louis was to see the way to victory marked out for his foes by the valiant Frenchmen to whom he made France intolerable.

Marshal Schomberg, the Protestant, to whom Louis gave leave to quit France, carried his sword to William of Orange, and at the battle of the Boyne he led the English and the Dutch, who routed the French on that fateful day.

In the Netherlands, in Germany, and in England, entire regiments were formed of these refugees; and throughout Europe the story of persecution aroused wrath which gathered like a storm-cloud round the head of the French king.

Strange to say, he hastened the tempest by another attack upon the Pope.

The elector of Cologne died in June, 1688; and it was important to Louis that his successor should be as pliant a tool of France as the deceased had been. A.D. 1688

The French candidate was Fürstenberg, bishop of Strasbourg; the choice of the opposition was Prince Clement of Bavaria. Out of the twenty-four votes of the chapter in which was vested the power to elect, Fürstenberg got thirteen votes and Clement nine. But a rule

of the chapter provided that a candidate who already held a bishopric must get two-thirds of the votes, hence Fürstenberg did not have enough.

The Pope had it in his power to dispense with this two-thirds rule, and Louis requested him to do so. But the Holy Father was not grieved to see the wheels of opportunity turn round and present to him the sweets of retaliation. He curtly and contemptuously refused the French monarch's request, and issued a papal decree, or bull, recognizing Prince Clement as elector of Cologne.

Louis poured his troops into Germany, laid siege to Philippsburg, and thus commenced a war which was to last nine years.

The French king had 350,000 soldiers led by able generals. In Italy, in Spain, in the Netherlands, in Ireland, in Germany, war was waged.

William of Orange had become king of England by the Revolution of 1688, which drove out James II. Louis welcomed the royal fugitive with imperial courtesy, made the quarrel of James his own, and sent fleets and armies to reinstate upon the English throne a monarch whom the English people had cast out.

Ireland was made the basis of the French attack on England — Ireland being strongly Catholic. At the battle of the Boyne, the royal father-in-law, James II., was defeated by his son-in-law, William of Orange, and once more escaped to France, his cause hopelessly lost, while William remained monarch of Great Britain. In all his warlike operations, from youth to old age, William found no opponent excepting his father-in-law whom he could beat, and the battle of the Boyne was an oasis in the desert of his manifold drubbings.

On the Rhine the French occupied the territories of Cologne, laid waste the Palatinate with barbarous cruelty, dismantled the beautiful town and castle of Heidelberg, swept the fields bare with fire and sword, and drove 100,000 homeless wretches into exile, to spread all over Germany the story of French atrocity. A.D. 1689

In Italy the Duke of Savoy lost town after town, until he had nothing left but Turin. In the Netherlands Luxembourg, a great soldier, commanded. Assisted by Vauban, the famous engineer, he took the fortified cities of Mons and Namur. Louis XIV. had caused himself and his ladies to be carried to the front, and in majestic self-complacency he looked on from a safe distance, while the sieges were being pressed. A.D. 1690

After the capitulation, he sincerely believed that he had achieved the triumph by himself, and he returned with his train to Paris to feast upon the praise of the admiring world. A.D. 1691

But William of Orange was in the field now, prepared to hang on with bulldog tenacity, ready to do any amount of fighting, take any number of beatings, and never let go until his point had been gained.

Coming over from England, he arrived too late to save either Mons or Namur. He fought Luxembourg at Steenkerke, and got whipped unmercifully. A short time afterwards he was at Denain with 50,000 men, offering battle to Louis XIV., who had 90,000. And Louis, instead of accepting the challenge, hurriedly bade adieu to his astonished officers, turned his royal back upon the challenger, and whirled away to Paris. A.D. 1692 and 1693

Luxembourg was so disgusted with the proceeding that he gathered up his army, weakened as it was by the loss of 20,000 men sent by Louis to Italy, fell upon the impu-

dent William, and beat him soundly in the bloody battle of Neerwinden.

Our tough Dutchman stood the defeat with his usual fortitude, and before many months have passed we find
A.D. 1695 him retaking the great fortress of Namur, which had cost Louis so much blood and treasure.

Thus, while the French troops were victorious in pitched battles, the results which followed were disappointing.

In another quarter appeared a foe who was to do immense harm to France. Prince Eugene of Savoy was a Frenchman by birth — the son of a niece of Cardinal Mazarin. At the age of nineteen he had applied to Louis for a regiment. The Grand Monarch had contemptuously refused to make a colonel out of the "little Savoyard abbé," and the insulted prince entered the service of the House of Austria. In 1692 he led the Austrian forces in Italy, routed the French completely, and invaded France. The miseries which the French had inflicted upon Italy and Germany were now in turn suffered in Dauphiny.

The condition of the French people, in consequence of this prolonged and senseless war, was wretched in the extreme. Taxation was ruinously heavy, trade was blocked, and production discouraged.

One-tenth of the population was reduced to beggary. "France is one vast hospital," says Fénelon, memorializing the king himself.

If this was the state of France, what must have been the horrors of the situation in those provinces where the war was waged?

Cities had been half destroyed, towns and villages

burnt or depopulated, fields ravaged, entire districts turned into charred, smoking, blood-stained solitudes.

And for what?

To gratify the inordinate pride and ambition of an absolute king who believed that his word should be law to European princes and peoples.

After nine years of fighting, France was bleeding at every pore, and weak to exhaustion.

Louis wanted peace; observe his manner of seeking it.

He approached the Duke of Savoy and sought to detach him from the coalition. Louis had been very overbearing to this little duke, had denied him the pleasure of a visit to Vienna and sundry other things; had interfered in his domestic government, had driven away his peaceful, industrious subjects, and had bullied him abominably and systematically.

Now all was changed, Louis was in a corner, and needed this little duke — in fact, was obliged to secure him, regardless of price.

The fortress of Casale was surrendered to the duke, then Pignerol, which Richelieu had won for France, then every town and all the territory Louis had seized during the war. Furthermore, the duke was promised that his daughter should marry the heir to the crown of France, and was assured that henceforth Louis would not bully him any more, but would treat him as an independent king.

Upon these conditions the duke became mollified, pulled out of the coalition, and the great federation against France fell to pieces.

The Treaty of Ryswick (1697) put an end to the war. A.D.
Louis had commenced it in order to install his candidate, 1697

Fürstenberg, as elector of Cologne; he not only failed utterly to do this, but in order to obtain peace he was compelled to surrender all that France had acquired in twenty years, excepting Strasbourg. He gave up the places he had seized under the decisions of the special French tribunals, pledging himself not to resort to that kind of spoliation any more. He formally recognized William of Orange as lawful king of England, and promised to give no aid to any claimant to that throne. He refused to concede liberty of worship to the Protestants in France; but he exacted it for the Catholics in the territories which he surrendered.

The Treaty of Ryswick was a humiliation to Louis and to France.

"We have always beaten the enemy," said Vauban, indignantly, "and yet we make a peace which dishonours the king and the nation."

This was true; but when one beats an enemy like William of Orange, and wears one's self out in doing it, what remains but to sue for peace?

CHAPTER XXXIII

SOME NAVAL HEROES : DUQUESNE ; JEAN BART ; D'ESTRÉES. WARS OF THE GRAND MONARCH ; HIS SECRET MARRIAGE TO MADAME DE MAINTENON

DURING the several wars of the Grand Monarch there was fighting at sea as well as on land, and the French naval commanders won some important battles — and lost some.

In Duquesne the French developed a sea-fighter of fine ability. He beat and destroyed the combined fleets of Holland and Spain in three suceessive actions in the Mediterranean (1676); bombarded Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli; humbled the pirates (1681–1683); and crushed Genoa (1684).

Duquesne was a Protestant, who, born at Dieppe in 1610, first commanded a vessel of his own, and rose from a privateer through all the grades of promotion until he was made lieutenant-general. He could rise no higher because of his religion.

D'Estrées was another naval commander of distinction. He captured Cayenne (1676), and destroyed ten of the enemy's vessels in the port of Tobago. In 1678 he conquered the island itself, and seized all the Dutch factories in Senegal.

Tourville, convoying to Ireland the expedition of James II. (1689), was beset by the united squadrons of England

and Holland. He attacked them off Beachy Head (1690) and won a brilliant victory. He lost the battle of La Hogue (1692), which he fought against overwhelming odds, in obedience to the peremptory orders of Louis XIV.; but in 1693 he had his revenge in the victory of Cape St. Vincent in the bay of Lagos.

Jean Bart is a robust figure of these times. He came of a race of corsairs of Dunkirk. A corsair, you must know, was a gentleman pirate. He did unto all ships but those of his own country the deeds which pirates did unto all ships without exception.

The grandfather of Jean Bart had been a celebrity, known in corsair circles as the Sea-fox. His death was heroic. The Dutch had attacked him with overwhelming force and had boarded his vessel. All the crew were dead, save the Sea-fox. Into the hold of the vessel which he could not save crept the resolute commander, torch in hand, and while the victors were enjoying their triumph on the deck, he put his torch to the powder stored in the hold. There was a mighty explosion; and the ships, and the Dutchmen, and the desperate Sea-fox, all went into chaos together.

The father of Jean Bart was likewise a semi-pirate of eminent respectability — standing exceedingly well with his neighbours, who helped him enjoy the plunder he took on the seas.

Thus Jean was cradled in the luxuries and liberties and heroisms of legalized piracy, and from his youth up he followed the sea.

In 1666 he served in the crew of a man of war commanded by a brute named Valbué. Even at this early age Jean Bart was a hero; and perhaps his courage and

humanity were never more conspicuously shown than in his attempt to save from death a Huguenot sailor who was judicially murdered by Valbué.

In those days the captain of a ship was master of life and death on board his vessel.

The laws of Oléron were supposed to be his guide. This code was brief and simple. "An eye for an eye" was its underlying principle. If a sailor drew a knife upon another, the offending hand was nailed to the mast with a knife. If he wounded a messmate in the arm, his own arm paid the penalty. If he killed a comrade, his own body was tied to that of his victim, and both were cast into the sea.

Sailors were fond of this code, and practised it for several hundred years. It was easy to understand; it required no experts to expound it; no precedents had to be hunted down; no motion for a new trial vexed the public. The ship's crew were called up, a vote on the facts was taken, and the captain acted as judge, jury, and counsel.

There was one Huguenot sailor in the crew of Valbué, and his religion made him the butt of his messmates.

One evening Valbué was telling of a miracle he had heard of from some priest. According to this story a bishop had walked upon the water to the relief of a storm-tossed Breton vessel, and had worked at the pumps with more than mortal power till the craft was saved.

At the close of his tale, Valbué threw at the Huguenot an insulting remark and a tin can. Both missiles hit the target. The Huguenot, Lanoix by name, appealed from this rough usage to the laws of Oléron. Valbué, angered by his resistance, struck Lanoix with a capstan bar.

Lanoix retreated over the iron rail which ran across the

fore part of the ship, and warned Valbué not to strike him again, "for I have passed the chain." Had Lanoix been a Catholic, this appeal would probably have saved him, for the captain had no right under the law to pursue him when he had crossed "the chain of refuge," as it was called in the law, — analogous to the right of sanctuary which could be claimed on land. Valbué, in great fury, declared that the law of refuge did not apply to swine, to Jews, and to Huguenots. He rushed upon Lanoix, and struck him twice in the face. Lanoix stabbed the captain in the arm. Thereupon the whole crew, excepting Jean Bart and a sailor named Sauret, threw themselves upon him at the captain's command, and bore him down, but not before the doomed Protestant had killed one of them with his knife.

"Bring me the book," shouted the captain; and the cabin boy fetched the code of Oléron.

"Read me this law," demanded Valbué of Sauret, putting finger on the clause meant.

"I will not read it," answered Sauret, disgusted and indignant.

"You are not acting according to law," continued Sauret. "That unfortunate man" (Lanoix) "is entitled to three meals at which he may confess his fault; he is also entitled to make his oath of excuse and his promise of future obedience."

"Hush your mouth," shouted Valbué. "Being a heretic, he is entitled to none of these rights."

"Listen!" continued Valbué, whose method of procedure was, in truth, diabolically regular and correct. "'The sailor who raises his hand against his captain shall be fastened to the mast by a knife, and he shall be compelled to

loose his hand from the knife in such a way that he shall lose at least half his hand.'"

"Fetch me my sword," cried Valbué; and the cabin boy trotted briskly down and got it.

Valbué lashed the razor-like blade to the windlass, edge upwards, and then lashed Lanoix's arm to the blade.

"Lanoix, withdraw your arm as the law directs," continued the captain.

The wretched victim hesitated, and Valbué dashed upon him, caught him by the throat, and pressed him backwards. The arm being pulled against the naked steel was cut to the bone from wrist to elbow.

"Unlash the prisoner," said Valbué, and Lanoix fell to the deck, weak and bleeding.

"Bring me the body of Simon Larret," commands Valbué. This was the sailor Lanoix had killed.

"Listen to the law!" again thunders the captain.

"'If any sailor kills a messmate, the living man shall be lashed to the dead, and both shall be cast into the sea.'"

"Did Martin Lanoix kill Simon Larret?" asks Valbué of his crew.

"Yes," answer six, trying the question of fact only.

"No," answer young Jean Bart and old Sauret, trying the merit of the case in their minds, and not the facts only.

"Six against two; the majority rules," decides Valbué. "Carry out the law!"

And the two men, one dead and the other alive, are cast into the vast cemetery of the sea, to be known no more until the Last Day, when the Valbués of all times and all countries shall meet their victims, face to face, in the light of the eyes of the Eternal God.

That same evening the ship reached Calais, and Jean Bart, as well as Sauret, left it forever.

A very regular man Valbué was; he at once made his report of these incidents to his superior officer. This gentleman, the Sieur de Infreville, was so much moved by the atrocity of the occurrence that he reported the facts to Colbert, the great minister of Louis XIV. And Colbert, having also a human heart in him, submitted to Louis a scheme of reform in the maritime laws, and used the murder of Lanoix as an example of the barbarity of the existing code.

From this movement of Colbert's grew the Maritime Code of France.

We hear no more of Valbué. He doubtless lived to reach a good old age, and died peacefully in his bed, for he seems to have been a very parlous brute.

The intendant to whom Valbué's report had been made conceived a good opinion of Jean Bart, on account of his opposition to the murder of Lanoix, and a few days later he gave to the young sailor his first commission — to convey some French cavaliers of distinction across the Channel to the Dutch fleet which was blockading the English in the Thames. The mission was one of peril, and Jean Bart made it vastly more perilous by taking it into his head to reconnoitre the enemy, and ascertain their numbers and position, so that his report might be valuable to the Dutch admiral, the famous De Ruyter.

The venture was successfully made, however, and Jean Bart and Sauret, having come in full view of the English fleet and obtained the information they sought, made sail for the Dutch vessels, and landed the cavaliers safely on board.

De Ruyter was much pleased with the information the young sailor brought him, and he agreed to take Jean Bart and Sauret into his service.

During five years he remained with the Dutch, but when war broke out between them and France (1672) he at once returned to France.

In 1674 he commanded a coasting-lugger carrying two guns and a crew of thirty-six. He did some gallant deeds with this tub, and became a topic of conversation in his native town. During his first year the bold corsair, with his two-gun lugger, captured ten vessels, one of them being a Dutch brig of ten guns.

He was soon in command of a brigantine carrying ten guns, with which he captured a Dutch ship laden with gold-dust, ivory, and other pleasant things. At another time he came upon two Dutch ships convoying a fleet of fifteen fishing-smacks into harbour. Our respectable pirate swooped down upon this insufficiently protected company and captured the whole squadron.

It was time Jean Bart took another step upward, and we next find him in command of a frigate of twenty-four guns, with a crew of 150 men. By this time he is the hero of Dunkirk, the terror of the seas adjacent, and is beginning to be a national figure.

With his frigate, our brave corsair adds further to his fame and to his riches. He fights some desperate battles, leads his crew, sword in hand, to board the opposing vessels, and proves himself the toughest sea-lion that France has yet produced.

Even Louis, the Grand Monarch, condescended to hear of Jean Bart and to approve of his exploits. France has ever been weak on her naval side, and it pleased Colbert

and the king to make much of the corsairs and of the hero they had developed; consequently Louis sent Jean Bart a fine gold chain as a token of royal favour.

Year after year Jean Bart sailed the seas, fighting, triumphing, and patiently gathering up treasures on earth after the manner of thrifty persons. In 1679 Colbert ventured to make him a lieutenant in the royal navy. After a while he was sent with two ships to bombard the Barbary pirates, and with his accustomed coolness the French pirate hammered the Algerines in such unmerciful style that the Mediterranean was free from them for many years.

In 1689 he commanded two ships and fought the Dutch and English, beating them in every fight.

Had Louis been great enough to recognize the genius of Jean Bart and to give him a fleet while he was still young, France might possibly have been mistress of the seas instead of England; but there was too much prejudice at court against this "vulgar sailor," and two ships were all they would spare him.

In 1694 sixty French ships laden with grain were captured by the Dutch. Jean Bart flew to the rescue, beat the Dutch in a great battle, and victoriously convoyed the grain-ships homewards; thus perhaps saving France from famine, for she needed grain sorely at the time.

So great was the public joy that bells rang, bonfires blazed, processions marched, and public thanks were tendered the victors. Louis XIV. caused gold medals to be struck commemorating the event.

In addition to the medal inscribed with his name, Jean Bart was given a patent of nobility by the king and an annual pension of 50,000 livres.

His young son was made ensign in the royal navy.

Louis XIV. in his august condescension invited Jean Bart to visit him at Versailles. From royalty an invitation is a command and Jean Bart obeyed.

Fancy this sturdy, square-built, black-eyed sailor, clad plainly, his face darkened by exposure and seamed with the scars of battle, — fancy this man moving among the curled courtiers of Versailles! How the spoilt pages at the doors must have sneered at Jean Bart's heavy tread, his coarse hands, the lurch of his sailor's stride! How my Lord of Frogwallow and the Duke of Battercakes must have winked to the Marquis of Poodle-Doodle as they noted the appalling fact that Jean Bart did not wear the proper thing in laces, nor the latest elegance in wigs, nor the choicest tint in ribbons!

Jean Bart kneels at the feet of Louis XIV., and kisses the royal hand. Let us hope that the brave sailor felt no actual reverence for this sham and humbug royalty.

The king looked upon the sailor with something like respect. "Jean Bart, I would that I had 10,000 men like thee," said Louis.

"I can well believe it, Sire," replied the ex-pirate, as bold as ever. All strong men know their value.

At the age of fifty-two, Jean Bart was made commodore, and commissioned to prepare a squadron for service in the English Channel.

Exposure to the weather, in getting his fleet ready, brought on pleurisy, and the doctors were called in to cure him. They bled him and blistered him until all his strength was gone and he died; killed by ignorant physicians, just as Philip the Good had been killed 200 years before and as Washington was killed 100 years later.

The crown of Spain, descending from Charles the Great to his son Philip II., and from Philip to successors who grew weaker as the line of descent lengthened, now
A.D. 1700 (1700) rested upon the head of Charles II., a superstitious idiot. The halo of divine right never consecrated a more unattractive person. He was bald, he was paralyzed, he was epileptic, and he was impotent. In 1696, Stanhope, the English minister at Madrid, writes: "He has a ravenous stomach, and swallows all he eats whole, for his nether jaw stands so much out that his two rows of teeth cannot meet." His general appearance was that of a drivelling imbecile.

So great was his ignorance that he did not know the names of the large towns of his own dominions. During the war with France he was heard to pity England for losing cities which in fact belonged to himself as king of Spain.

He lived in constant terror of evil spirits, devils, ghostly apparitions, and other similar fancies of a disordered brain. Of course he was a tool in the hands of the priests. Two of them slept in his room every night for the purpose of guarding the poor invalid from the attacks of Satan. His marriage had naturally remained childless. In 1700 it became evident that his life would soon come to a close, and the all-important question in diplomatic circles was, who should inherit the crown of Spain and its immense colonial possessions.

Louis of France wanted the dying idiot to make a will conveying the Spanish realms to the Duke of Anjou, grandson of Louis. On the other hand, Leopold, emperor of Germany, wished the crown bequeathed to a prince of the House of Austria.

The court of Spain became the scene of the liveliest

intrigue and contention between the rival candidates for the imperial legacy. Bribes were lavished here and there among influential grandees of both sexes, belonging to the Spanish court; and priests, some of whom had been bought by Louis, and some by Leopold, worked the supernatural machinery until the superstitious Charles II. found himself beleaguered by a formidable array of devils — Austrian and French. The Austrian devils warned him against making a will in favour of France. The French devils menaced him with the perils of leaving the legacy to Austria.

Finally, on October 2, 1700, the dying king, by solemn will and testament, conveyed to the French candidate all the possessions of the crown of Spain. By a few scratches of the pen an empire in Italy, in the Netherlands, in North and South America, in the islands of the Spanish Main, and in Spain itself, — including men, women, and children, lands, houses, and cattle, — was transfered by a dotard to a beardless boy of a foreign race. Not to any person concerned in the transaction did it occur that the people of the territories devised had any right to object to being transfered from the ownership of one king to that of another.

On November 9, 1700, Charles II. died. Louis XIV. formally consented to the acceptance of the Spanish crown by his grandson; and the young man, under the title of Philip V., took possession of his vast inheritance, — the greatest, perhaps, that ever fell to any mortal by virtue of a will. Castile, Aragon, the Two Sicilies, Peru, Mexico, the West Indies, Milan, Flanders, were all embraced in this astounding legacy. And nowhere, either in the New World or the Old, did the people

make any protest to the exercise of the royal right to tranfer them to a new master by a few words scratched upon paper.

But the princes of Europe were deeply stirred. Louis XIV., in scheming to secure this legacy for his grandson, had violated his word, twice pledged. In two separate treaties, a division of the Spanish possessions had been agreed on between William of Orange, Louis XIV., the emperor, and other princes concerned — for it had long been apparent that Charles II. would leave no heir.

In seizing the whole inheritance for his grandson, Louis had broken faith, and all Europe was alarmed at this tremendous enlargement of French influence.

A.D. 1701 William of Orange bitterly denounced the breach of contract, and another coalition against France was organized.

To make matters worse, Louis promised James II., as that unfortunate exile lay dying in Paris, to recognize his son as rightful king of England. To this purpose Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits had cunningly schemed.

This acknowledgment of the Stuart Pretender was not only a violation of the Treaty of Ryswick, but was a deadly insult to William of Orange and to the English people. It was monstrous that a king of France should arrogate to himself the right to decide who should be ruler of England; and the English resented it — just as France in later times resented England's dictation as to who should be ruler of France.

Louis XIV., in his headlong folly, expelled the Dutch garrison from the frontier towns in the Netherlands.

The Dutch naturally inferred that Louis meant to annex Flanders, and, dreading the consequences of another general war, they proposed to him a plan of settlement of the troubles pending, but he rejected it, refusing to concede anything.

He would not even oblige his grandson to sign an agreement renouncing his rights of inheritance to the crown of France, although the will of Charles II. had expressly provided that this should be done, in order to prevent the danger of both crowns being the property of the same person at the same time.

A general war, known as the war of the Spanish succession, ensued, all Europe being in arms against Spain and France. Spain had no troops and no money. She was therefore a burden to France rather than a help. The Dukes of Savoy and Modena, and the Elector of Bavaria were allies of Louis, but their aid counted for little or nothing. A.D. 1701

From 1701 to 1711 the struggle went on in Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. At first the French held their own, but in 1704 Marlborough and Prince Eugene gained the battle of Blenheim, and the tide of success turned strongly against Louis. On that disastrous day a marshal of France and 11,000 of his men were taken prisoners on the field. No such calamity had befallen France since the capture of Francis I. at Pavia. A.D. 1704

In 1706 the French defeat at Ramillies was followed by the loss of the greater part of Spanish Flanders. While Marlborough was thus advancing victoriously in the Netherlands, Prince Eugene drove the French out of Italy and invaded the southern provinces of France.

A.D. 1708 Marlborough again beat the French in the battle of Oudenarde. Alsace, French Flanders, and Artois were invaded by the allies.

In 1708 Marlborough gained the hard-fought field of Malplaquet, and Lille, Ghent, Mons, Bouchain, and other frontier towns were lost to France. "On to Paris," was now the cry of the allies, and a party of Dutch actually penetrated as far as the neighbourhood of Versailles — the sacred precincts of French royalty.

Louis XIV., thoroughly humbled, sued for peace, offering concessions very humiliating to himself. The allies were intoxicated by their success, and Marlborough was making huge profits out of the war, consequently Louis' overtures were rejected.

The courageous old monarch rose to the occasion. He had offered to surrender all that the allies had claimed, and to assist in compelling his grandson to relinquish the crown of Spain. Time and again he had urged that young monarch to save France from further loss by resigning, but Philip V., intent upon remaining a king, viewed French losses, incurred in his behalf, with considerable philosophy, and candidly assured his grandfather that he had no notion of resigning.

The allies rejected Louis' offer to aid them in expelling this ungrateful grandson, and insisted that he himself must make war upon Philip, and oust him. Louis had set up this upstart king, and it was therefore Louis' business to pull him down. But here the Grand Monarch halted in his concessions. He wanted Philip ousted, was willing to help oust him, but did not wish to go to war with him single-handed. "If I must fight, I will fight my enemies rather than my own children," said he, with

commendable spirit. The French nation rallied to the old monarch, and the war continued. The Duke of Vendôme, grandson of Henry IV., gained two much-needed victories in Spain against the allies, and the French suddenly took heart again. A turn in English politics threw the friends of Marlborough out of power. His enemies were jealous of his fame and his rapidly accumulating fortune, and peace negotiations were set on foot. Had the coalition lasted, and had Marlborough and Prince Eugene been left to press their advantages, there can be little doubt that Paris itself would have fallen, and that France would have drained then the bitter cup which was reserved for later times. Voluntarily the allies granted Louis better terms than he expected. As it was, they were hard enough.

By the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht France lost Newfoundland and the Hudson Bay country, which were ceded to England. She also gave up to England the monopoly of the slave-trade.

The Dutch gained the frontier towns which had been so long in dispute. Louis was also compelled to dismantle the fortifications of Dunkirk, and to expel from France the Stuart claimant of the English throne, besides agreeing to release from prison the Protestant victims of religious persecution.

By this Treaty of Utrecht, England gained from Spain Gibraltar and Minorca, acquisitions of vast importance. Austria took from Spain Milan, Naples, Sardinia, and the Spanish Low Countries, while the Duke of Savoy got Sicily.

Thus, in order to put the crown of Spain upon the head of his thankless grandson, Louis XIV. had cursed the

French people with the horrors of nine years of war, had caused the destruction of millions of property and thousands of lives, had led his own fortunes to the very brink of ruin, had tasted the bitterness of defeat and humiliation, and had only reaped the barren reward that Philip V. still remained king of dismembered Spain.

By his unwise policy Louis had drained French resources until the kingdom was well-nigh desperate, and loud cries of popular dissatisfaction were even heard in the streets of Versailles. But this was not all. He had again built up the House of Austria; he had made England the mistress of the seas and of the trade of the world, and had put the keys of the Mediterranean into her hands. He had ceded to her immense colonial territories in North America, and had thus taken the first great step in the retreat which France was to make before the ever increasing demands of Great Britain. Of all his mad enterprises, this last war was the most fatal, for it crippled France, while it strengthened the rivals from whom she had most to fear.

It is made a reproach to the reign of Louis XV. that incompetent courtiers were placed in command of the armies which were sent against such warriors as Frederick the Great. The reproach is well deserved, but Louis XV. did not originate the practice.

Under Louis XIV., the army which met Marlborough at Oudenarde was under the command of the Duke of Burgundy, the beardless grandson of the French king, a boy who knew nothing about military affairs. It is true that the Duke of Vendôme, a dissolute, lazy, but able commander, was second in command and was expected to keep the young duke well advised, but the

beardless boy was really the chief of the army, and, listening to the courtiers who had his ear, he refused to be guided by Vendôme. The result was as disastrous as anything which happened under Louis XV. Vendôme gave battle to Marlborough, relying upon the young duke to do his share of the fighting. The Duke of Burgundy did nothing of the kind. He kept himself carefully out of danger while Marlborough was hammering the life out of Vendôme's divisions.

The odium of the defeat fell wholly upon Vendôme, since no one dared to accuse the king's grandson of having acted the dolt or the coward.

Vendôme remained at court in disgrace and without employment until the king of Spain asked that he should be sent to lead the demoralized Spaniards against the victorious Austrians and English. The brave old soldier promptly answered the call of duty, set out upon what proved to be his last campaign, took charge of the Spanish forces, captured the English force and its commander, Stanhope, routed the Austrians at Villa Viciosa, and made secure to Louis' grandson the long-contested throne of Spain. By this brilliant service Vendôme not only rescued Spain from foreign invasion, but he so completely altered the general aspect of the war that the allies hastened to grant Louis terms which previously had been out of his reach.

The fact that Vendôme's victory of Villa Viciosa saved France as well as Spain in this war, just as his successful siege of Barcelona had strengthened Louis at a critical time in the former one, affords ample ground for believing that, had a callow youth not been put over him at Oudenarde, that battle might have ended very differently.

But the Duke of Burgundy was not the only imbecile whom Louis placed in command of the armies of France.

His son, the dauphin, had been general-in-chief in the Low Countries. The young man had seen no service; he had shown no capacity in that line nor in any other. He never did show any capacity in that line, or in any other. He died without having left any record of himself except that he attracted some attention as a tireless hunter of wolves in the royal forests.

Apart from this shadowy claim to individuality, it does not appear that he was entitled to any other distinction than that of being the only legitimate son of his father. The one essentially useful thing he ever did, even from the point of view of royalty, was that he, in turn, begat a legitimate son, and thus kept the blood-royal in the proper channel. Beyond that he was swallowed up in the blaze of his father's glory.

He commanded the army because his father told him to command it, and he did it the best he knew how. He galloped every morning to the outposts to see that they were still there; then he galloped back to his tent to write the cheering news to his father, and to ask for further orders. The courier having been duly despatched with the message, the dauphin sat down to a game of cards, trusting any other military trifle that might need attention to Marshal Luxembourg.

The armies of France were in no serious danger from the dauphin as long as Luxembourg was present to direct his feeble superior; but Luxembourg died after a while, and the dauphin returned to court to adore his father and to hunt wolves. Petticoat influence and court favouritism put Villeroi in command of the army. He knew

nothing of war, and was not capable of learning; he was therefore beaten and battered out of all shape, and brought the French troops to the plane of demoralization which they reached again in the next reign under the leadership of such courtiers as Soubise.

Historians dwell upon the manner in which Louis XV. was governed by women and priests.

That he was so governed is true, — but the Grand Monarch was governed also by the same combination. Women and priests knew his real character, its weakness and its strength, its impatience of restraint, its greed for adulation, its colossal vanity and egotism.

It was Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits who led him into the path of persecution. They appealed to his vanity, and represented to him the glory of the achievement if he could bring all his subjects back into the old faith. He would be the hero of the Church. Time and eternity would sing his praises.

Then they played to another trait of his character. The Catholic religion was *his* religion. He was the State, and therefore the Catholic religion was the religion of the State. To be a scoffer at the king's religion was to be wanting in obedience. It smacked of defiance of the royal will and pleasure. It was rebellion in embryo.

We have already seen that upon no point was Louis more sensitive than upon this. A more exacting despot never lived, when the question concerned his dignity, authority, or power. We have already seen that neither king nor Pope might safely withhold any privilege, prerogative, or mark of respect which Louis conceived to be his of right.

It can readily be imagined that the Huguenots of

France would thus incur deadly peril if the Jesuits, and their tool, the Maintenon, could poison Louis' mind with the idea that the religious attitude of the Protestants was disrespectful and disloyal to the king. That the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was connected in some way with the secret marriage of Louis to Madame de Maintenon seems certain.

This woman was one of the most remarkable of those feminine diplomatists who have controlled the destinies of nations.

She was a Huguenot by birth, the daughter of a D'Aubigné. In her youth her poverty was extreme; she did menial service for her aunt, and looked forward to life in a convent as the highest for which she might hope. Her beauty and her charm of manner and of conversation attracted friends.

The paralytic poet, Scarron, heard of her, offered to make her his wife, and she accepted him. With Scarron she lived in an atmosphere of fun, frolic, scepticism, and immorality. Her husband was a shrewd, jolly creature who knew that he should drive away his friends if he complained of his afflictions, so he jested and laughed, encouraged his company to forget everything but his wit, and thus bravely bore his cross until the end. His last words are very touching: "At length I shall be well."

The death of her husband plunged Madame Scarron again into poverty, and she struggled along for some years partly supported by a small pension granted her by the queen. Although St. Simon asserts positively that she became the mistress of several noblemen, she was generally considered a model of discretion, — so much so that Madame de Montespan, the king's acknow-

ledged mistress, who had known her when she was Scarron's wife, selected her to be at the head of the separate establishment given to the Duc de Maine, the Montespan's eldest son, by Louis XIV.

The demure widow managed affairs with such tact and wisdom and patience, that Louis, in course of time, became fonder of the governess than he was of the mother. He desired the widow for his mistress and she declined the honour. This was a novelty in the royal experience, and its effect was to enhance the value of the widow in his esteem.

The widow Scarron, or, as she had now been made by gift of the king, Madame de Maintenon, was one of the most devout of women. She had become a Catholic, and had developed the proverbial zeal of the apostate. She was narrow, bigoted, intolerant, and superstitious. Above all, she was most devoted to her confessor. She and the priest were in absolute harmony.

Here then we have the elements of a drama.

A lustful king who has never met with opposition in his various love-affairs, is attracted by a fascinating widow who repulses him—but does it gently; a widow who is dazzled by the prospects opened to her by royal favour, but who, being forty-eight years of age, is old enough to know the value of virtue; artful priests who have the ear of both the king and the widow, and who are desperately intent upon stamping out heresy.

These may be no more than coincidences; but the results which followed give plausibility to the supposition that the Jesuits connived at a secret marriage between the widow and the king, upon the condition that she would exert her all-powerful influence against the Huguenots.

At any rate, it is undeniable that Madame de Maintenon was for thirty years obedient to the will of the priests, and that the gloom and the persecution of the king's later years are largely chargeable to her; for almost immediately after their marriage Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes, and the horrors of religious persecution were inaugurated. In all history, there is not a record more painful to read than that which relates the hideous barbarities which frenzied mobs, hounded on by fanatical priests, and sanctioned by bigoted officials of the State, inflicted upon the Protestants of France. Brutal soldiers were thrown into the hunt to add their bestialities to the carnival of crime. Daughters were violated and wives were ravished. Many a victim was stripped naked, slashed with knives, stuck full of pins, the nose wrenched away with red-hot pincers, nails pulled off the fingers, the feet burnt with hot irons — all to further conversion to the state Church.

In the orgy of barbarous cruelty and fanaticism France lost a million of her industrious citizens, sent away into other lands the trade secrets which were then hers alone, filled the armies of her enemies with desperate refugees who fought her to the death, and well-nigh paralyzed all branches of her commerce.

Surely Louis XV. never paid any such price for his Pompadour and Du Barry as Louis XIV. paid for his Maintenon.

Louis XV. is justly reproached for having gone to war with Frederick of Prussia because that monarch had spoken disdainfully of the Pompadour. But it seems equally clear that Louis XIV. went to war with all Europe because he and Louvois had a dispute about the

size of a window. The story goes that Louis detected a want of correspondence in the size of two windows in the palace of Versailles, then in course of construction. He called the attention of Louvois to this defect. Louvois denied the discrepancy. This angered the king, and to settle the question, the window was measured. The defect existed. Louvois retreated abashed, filled with uneasiness. The king's loss of favour might follow, — and then one might as well be dead.

"I must get up a war to divert his attention, and to make me necessary to him," said Louvois, he being the acknowledged greatest of war ministers.

So Louvois fanned the fire in the Cologne electorate squabble, and saw to it that the flames of war mounted high. The king's mind became very sufficiently occupied, his great War Minister was indispensable, the window wrangle was forgotten.

So the story goes. Perhaps there is no truth in it, but it is as well supported by evidence as the story that Louis XV. involved France in ruinous war because of Pompadour's resentment against Frederick for a gibe of his.

The indifference of Louis XV. to the sufferings of the people has been condemned; but I do not find that any tale of woe ever touched the feelings of Louis XIV., unless the trouble was within his immediate circle. He had no breadth of sympathy, no paternal solicitude for the people in mass.

When it is reported to him that the people of Dauphiny, in 1675, are reduced to a diet of acorns, roots, grass, and bark, he does not retrench his expenditures, lower the taxes, or send relief. He leaves nature to take care of the case. In 1682 it is officially reported that in Poitou

the people have been without bread for two years. In 1692, 70,000 persons in Limoges are living on chestnuts and alms. In Normandy (1693) the peasants were dying of hunger; provision trains were attacked and plundered by starving men and women, who are in such wretched plight that they have almost lost the likeness of human beings.

None of these reports gave Louis XIV. any sorrow; none of them provoked remedial legislation; none of them caused taxes to be reduced or the court expenditures lowered. The people might scuffle along as best they could on chestnuts, acorns, roots, grass, and alms,—but to the Grand Monarch no hint of self-denial must ever be made.

All the property of all the people is his. He has thought so, the doctors of divinity have so decided, and his confessor confirms the belief. Wherefore, let his subjects be thankful that he does not take all that they have, it all being his.

There must be no lack of splendour at the court, no matter how they starve in the provinces. Versailles must blaze with diamonds, blossom with silks, resound with music, and reek with the odour of lamps of incense burning night and day before the great king. There must be plays and operas three times a week. There must be a ball every Saturday. In one room of the palace musicians must always be playing for those who love music; in another for those who will dance. Gaming tables are kept in perpetual readiness for those who will gamble.

Refreshments of food and wine must be ready at all hours, night and day.

And there must be fêtes and carousals in the park,

jousts and tourneys, gay gondola parties on the grand canal, masked balls within the palace, and brilliant festivities at every marriage or other notable felicity in the charmed circle of the privileged.

"This is enchanted ground," says Royalty, "and Want shall not intrude its hungry features here." "Let *us* eat, drink, and be merry — how it fares with the balance of you we neither know nor care."

And the king, having said this, — not in words, but in deeds, — struts grandly in to his dinner, to the music of twenty-four fiddles. Not a single fiddler will our Grand Monarch dispense with, no matter what may be the condition of his people.

The primary cause which brought on the Revolution of 1789 was the Public Debt and the Deficit. This Public Debt and this Deficit were two of the heirlooms which the Grand Monarch handed down to his hapless successors. He spent the money and they had the bills to meet. They could not pay the debt, nor the interest upon it, and the French Monarchy went down under the accumulated burden of misrule, feeble administration, unjust laws, and a bankrupt treasury, — all of which troubles Louis XIV. had majestically transmitted to his feeble descendants.

So profound was the self-esteem in which this preposterous egotist lapped himself, that even the supple knees of professional courtiers were severely taxed. A new language of adoration had to be invented. The most extravagant expressions of admiration grew to be commonplace, and the talent of self-abasement was reduced to a fine art by the demands made upon it by the colossal vanity of this pompous despot.

One courtier, who had been banished for a time, said to the king on his return: "When banished from your Majesty, one is not only unhappy, but is ridiculous."

Another courtier erected a monument in Paris upon which Louis XIV. was represented as leading all the nations of Europe in chains.

When the statue of the king was dedicated in the Place of Victories at Paris, the governor of the city, accompanied by all the officials and civic bodies, solemnly marched around it in state, and prostrated themselves before it in true barbaric style.

We exemplars of Christian civilization are the most puzzling of human creatures. We cannot tolerate heathen rites, performed by the heathen; we exterminate the heathen, but we perpetuate his rites. Both in Church and State we constantly do what the pagans did. We worship as gods those whom we revere as saints or heroes — those who are better than we are, or those who are stronger than we are.

At Poitiers a statue of the king was erected, and its inscriptions declared that Louis was the arbiter of war and peace, an immortal hero, and the joy of the world. The orator of the occasion, at the unveiling of the statue, drew a comparison between Louis and God, in which the advantage was rather grudgingly yielded to God. The king was much pleased with the address and appointed the speaker a member of the Academy.

So far was this spirit of deification carried that the courtier, passing through the royal bedchamber, would make a deep bow to the bed; and a similar reverence before the aigrette, — the silver vessel in which the king's napkins and knife and fork were kept.

Louis XIV. to the Frenchman of his day represented God on earth in political affairs, just as the Pope represented Him in spiritual affairs.

The mystic halo of the doctrine of "Divine Right" sanctified and elevated him as a man apart from other men — infinitely higher, stronger, wiser. Had he not been anointed with the sacred oil brought from heaven by a dove? The Church said so; the State said so; it were treason to doubt it. No good Catholic did doubt it. Or if he did, had no remarks to make.

Did he not perform miraculous cures, by virtue of the divine grace imparted to him, by simply touching the afflicted, as Christ touched them? Church and State both said he did, and the afflicted crowded forward to be touched and miraculously healed.

CHAPTER XXXIV

DEATH OF THE GRAND MONARCH, AND SKETCH OF THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

FOR seventy odd years Louis has lived and reigned, but now the end draws nigh. Not all the divinity that doth hedge a king can intimidate that remorseless conqueror called Old Age.

The household troops may parade, the bugles blare, the fiddles ring, the fountains play, the gardens blossom, the courtiers bow and scrape, fawn and flatter, but Louis bends beneath the burden of the years, and spiders weave betwixt him and the sun.

A.D. 1715

He has the grandest palace in all the world, set down amidst the loveliest gardens, fountains, and park. His treasury had been exhausted in rearing this marble abode, in creating this sylvan paradise. It has cost France very dearly, this Versailles. In money it cost $150,000,000, and nobody knows how many lives; for when the soldiers were set to work to drain marshes and cut canals for its water-supply, they died like flies, and the dead were carted off each night to their nameless graves.

And when at last the formal walks had all been laid, and the noble trees from Fontainebleau transplanted in regular order, the parterres created, the hedges set, and the fountains put in motion, Louis had asked his Montespan if the work was not perfect.

"It only needs a snowfall, so that we could sleigh-ride along the grand avenues in the glorious park," answered the woman.

Louis said nothing, but that night the avenues of the park for miles were covered with snowy salt and sugar, and the king's harlot, in company with the king and the gorgeous miscellany of the court, went sleighing over the whitened roads, the bells jingling silvery music, and the favourites jingling light chatter and lighter laughter as they whirled along.

That was many years ago. The king was young then, and so was the Montespan.

His youth has long since left him, and his Montespan, after he grew tired of her, he put aside. She has been dead these many years.

In his vast palace Louis now awaits the end. He has lost children, friends, glory. The only human being who ever loved him, Louise de la Vallière, died heartbroken in a convent years ago, driven from the court by the intrigues of more mercenary rivals. He has lost his illusions. He knows how little he now counts for in the great world. He knows that sporting men in Holland and elsewhere are laying bets as to his living out the year, just as they would bet on the speed of a horse or the turn of a card.

He knows that Time has disfigured his person, and he rouges his cheek, pads his clothing, and hides his swelling ankles and legs.

Very lonely must Louis have felt, for he knew that the people already hated his name, wished his death, and would curse his memory. He knew that the courtiers longed for a new reign, and for the gayety and license

which the old monarch and his priests had suppressed during these later years.

By the side of the aged king sits his Maintenon, a wrinkled but sensible old woman of eighty years. She governs the king, and an old Jesuit priest governs her.

What a picture it is! All France has been drained in this direction for three generations. All the power, all the privilege, all the culture, all the revenues, have been drawn to the king and his court as far as law could effect it.

Here is the worn-out monarch waiting for the knock of him who knocks at the door of the palace and of the hut, callously impartial; and around that dying king goes on the same comedy of human greed which marks the death of the merest chattel-owning peasant.

By right of birth and precedent, Louis, Duke of Orleans, nephew of the king, is entitled to the regency during the minority of Louis XV.

But the Duke of Maine, bastard son of Louis XIV. by the Montespan, wants the regency for himself, and the Maintenon sides with him.

Thus the dying king is beset by a domestic intrigue, and sees no peace. The royal family is bent upon forcing him to make a will favourable to the Duke of Maine. They tease and torment the feeble monarch, pout at him, urge him, assail him with tears and persuasions, until he is fairly beaten. To secure peace, to enjoy the smiles of his own family circle again, he makes the will, warning them, however, that it will not be respected after his death.

All his life Louis had been acting a part. Everything he did was done according to fixed and inexorable rule.

He was formal, conventional, studied in look, in word, in gesture, in act. One who had seen him take wine at thirty years of age could safely swear to the exact manner in which he would take wine at the age of sixty. The weather being the same, one could make affidavit to the precise hour when Louis, cane in hand, could be seen strutting impressively along the avenues of the park of Versailles. At the same time every day the king took his meals, his walks, held his receptions, his councils, his levees, had his evening amusements, and went to bed.

Always and everywhere he was an actor, — acting the part of a great king. So morbid was his fondness for the theatrical side of his great office that his courtiers played upon it boldly and successfully. They even amused the old man with sham embassies, and his insane vanity was immensely gratified at the fulsome flatteries which appeared to come from the most distant quarters of the globe, when in fact they were composed by the courtiers at Versailles.

A few days before Louis died he was regaled by a sham embassy from Persia. The dying monarch arrayed himself in all his splendour, blazed in regal lustre from a gorgeous throne, listened to a pompous address from a pretended Persian ambassador, and retired exhausted, but pleased — never suspecting the fraud, and never to appear in public on a state occasion again.

In the article of death Louis was true to himself. He died as a great king should die. We cannot say that he rehearsed the part, as the Emperor Charles V. did, but no man ever died more correctly, composedly, and impressively.

He showed decent regret for past errors, but no abject contrition; he admitted just enough error to show that he consented to be considered human.

He accepted all the consolations of the Church, according to rule.

He called in his family, and made appropriate speeches to them. He sent for his successor, the little Louis XV., who was five years old, and made him a speech, which the boy could not have understood.

And then he turned to his faithful Maintenon, and spoke of their meeting in the next world, and regretted that he had not made her happier in this.

A.D. 1715 Having thus in the most correct manner made his bow to the world, the old man fell to praying to his God, and so died.

Madame de Maintenon, the unacknowledged wife and unacknowledged widow, left the palace before her husband had breathed his last. The courtiers wished her away. She retired to St. Cyr, a convent she had founded, and there she spent the remainder of her life in devotion and good works.

In 1717, Peter the Great, sojourning in France, went to visit so celebrated a woman. He found her in bed.

Pulling the curtains aside, Peter looked at her long and earnestly.

"Of what disease do you suffer?" asked he.

"Of old age," she answered.

He silently drew the curtains together, and departed.

She died in 1719, aged eighty-three.

Before quitting Louis XIV., let us see just what his system of government was.

It has already been said that he inherited this system

from his ancestors, and their ministers. From Richelieu, particularly, he derived the principle he put into practice. For seventy years the governmental machine was developed and perfected, and when Louis XIV. died, the ANCIEN RÉGIME was complete.

What was the Ancien Régime?

In matters political, all power was concentrated in the king. He, personally, was the government. He, in theory, was the proprietor of France. Her property was his. The taxes simply represented the proportion of his own which he was pleased to exact. In theory he could take it all if he wished.

There was no legislature. No lawmaking body intervened between him and his subjects. His will was law. His decrees were statutes. The only formality required was that the Parliament of Paris should register them on its records. And the Parliament registered whenever the king wished it.

The king made war and peace, contracted foreign alliances, coined money, and regulated commerce. The king raised armies, and disbanded them; imposed taxes, created offices, and suspended laws. Even in local affairs, he alone was master.

In every department he had his intendant, or overseer; and this royal intendant rode over local councils and local lords, subjecting all local authority to the king's authority. The nobility saw itself reduced to political impotence, all power being centralized in the person of the king.

The king then was supreme over nobles and people, but the nobles still enjoyed privileges which lifted them unmeasurably above the people.

They paid almost none of the taxes. The château of the noble, and the land around it, his woods, meadows, vineyards, ponds, and pleasure grounds could not be sold for taxes. Of the income and capitation tax, he paid a part, but his influence with the authorities was so great that his payments were little more than nominal.

For instance, the princes of the blood held two-twentieths of the national property, and were assessed for that proportion of taxes. They should therefore have paid 2,400,000 livres of the annual taxes. The amount they did pay was but 188,000.

Only a noble could hunt and kill game, fish, or keep a dove-cote. Only a noble could rise in the army, or in the higher offices of the Church. To the noble, after the king, belonged the power of wringing taxes from the people. The noble collected bridge duties, market duties, first fruits of the wine crop, dues for the oven, the mill, the wine-press.

In his immediate councils, where he wanted effective service and implicit obedience, the king rarely employed nobles. It was not his policy to encourage the growth of political power in the nobles, as compared to the power of the crown. Therefore commoners, who would be entirely dependent upon the royal favour, were appointed to the councils and to the position of intendant.

The people paid the king's taxes and the lord's dues, and got no accounting from either. None of the taxes wrung from the people were spent on the people. The king and the nobles spent it as they pleased. None of it was expended in public education for the commoners, none of it in improvements beneficial to the masses. The money wrung from a peasant by the sale of his pots and

ploughs was spent in aimless luxury at Versailles. Tillers of the soil famished while 300 cooks baked, broiled, stewed, and fricasseed to feast the 4000 parasites, courtesans, and place-hunters who infested the royal palace. Artisans hungered for bread in every street in the cities of France, while 3000 horses stood in the king's stables eating their heads off. Thousands of acres of the best land in France were being deserted because the burdens of feudal dues and royal taxes had literally crushed hope and effort, while the fickle taste of the king was pouring millions of treasure into the new palaces and grounds of Versailles and Marly, and was squandering other millions in paying the gambling debts of loose women and rakish men.

What the king was doing at Versailles and Marly the nobles were doing upon a smaller scale at their châteaux, when they could tear themselves away from the court.

There were hundreds of great feudal castle-palaces scattered about France, where all the senseless extravagance of the king was faithfully imitated, and where the horses lived in parlours and where the peasants lived in stables, where the dogs fed sumptuously three times a day, and the serfs who worked the fields rarely got enough black rye bread to quiet the pangs of hunger.

The immense privileges enjoyed by the nobles had once gone hand in hand with duties. The lord of the castle had defended the land from invaders, shielded the peasant from the robber, sheltered him in time of war, and aided him with tools, horses, and supplies in time of peace. In those days the noble was the champion. He fought the battles of his people. He met the enemy on the frontier. He went ever with his armour on, his sword by his side,

his spur on his heel. His horse saddled in his hall stood ready to go at the word.

Protecting the soil and the toilers in this valiant fashion, the noble acquired just rights over both, and exacted justly a support from those who worked while he watched and fought.

And as long as the noble was the champion of the people they paid him his dues cheerfully, looked up to him, loved him, were ready to die for him. When an heir was born to him every hill on his domains blazed with the bonfires of joy, — the champion of the people had an heir who would in turn be their champion!

In like manner the lord of the castle cleared the woods of dangerous game; therefore he naturally became the sole hunter. He alone could build the bridge; therefore he took toll. He alone could afford the cost of the oven, the wine-press, and the mill; therefore it was not strange that he should bake for his people and get some of the bread, grind for his people and get some of the grist, crush the grapes and get some of the wine.

Thus privileges and dues grew out of duties and services rendered. As long as these duties were performed or services rendered, no hardship was felt in paying the feudal dues.

But when the noble no longer watched or fought, no longer performed any duties whatsoever, or rendered the people any service at all, was it right that feudal dues should still be exacted?

When other mills, wine-presses, bridges, and ovens had been established, was it right to deny the people the freedom of going to them? When the peasant wanted to crush his few grains of rye or wheat between two stones,

at his own wretched hut, was it right for the noble to exact a license-fee for that poor privilege?

Did the game-laws ever go to such a pitch of insanity as they reached under the Ancien Régime, when it was made a crime for a peasant to enclose his crop to protect it from the deer and wild hogs? Such enclosures were adjudged to be an interference with the pleasures of the chase, were torn down, and the owner punished.

In many parts of the kingdom he had to watch his orchards, vineyards, and growing grain, all night as well as all day, to save them from herds of deer and droves of wild hogs. In the parish of Vaux alone, an official report shows that the rabbits in one season destroyed the crops of 7000 acres of land. The vineyards, the orchards, even the young poplars, were devoured by troops of deer. In the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau, the people had to employ gangs of watchmen to guard the vines from May until mid-October.

Four hundred square leagues of territory in France were subject to the control of the "captainries," that is, "game preserves." In these captainries the proprietors of the soil had no right to take or kill game. The proprietor of the soil, in his mere character of owner, had no right to plant hedges, dig ditches, or build fences, without special permission. Such hedges, ditches, and fences tended to interfere with the "pleasures of the chase," and could not be tolerated. The owner of the soil was not allowed to keep firearms. He was not even allowed to be followed by a dog, unless the dog was held by a leash. Between May 1 and June 24 he was not allowed to go into his own field; and he was forbidden to mow his grass before St. John's day. The reason was that the

partridges are hatching, and he might disturb them, thus interfering with my lord's "pleasures of the chase" again.

So carefully did the law encourage or protect wild animals at the expense of the peasants that they were accustomed to exclaim, whenever they saw a herd of deer, "Yonder goes the nobility!"

Among the nobles themselves the influence of the Ancien Régime was most destructive. It made life hollow and artificial, selfish and hypocritical. False standards ruled, and the natural was held to be the vulgar.

Husbands and wives were no longer faithful to one another. Married couples were rarely seen together. Children were almost strangers to their parents. Etiquette interposed its icy hands between mother and daughter, father and son.

The nobles affected to disdain business. It was considered aristocratic to be ignorant of matters of account, estate management, and commercial dealings.

A natural result was that the nobles became bankrupt, their estates went to pieces, and the men of the lower orders began to accumulate wealth, and to buy land more rapidly than they had ever done before.

Living in wasteful luxury, spending always and earning never, they sink into poverty. Huge debts encumber the feudal domains; little by little the lord of the manor sells off his surplus lands, and the rich tradesman, or miserly farmer, or thrifty lawyer of the Third Estate buys it.

The nobles are too proud to work. They will endure any privation rather than thus lower themselves. Even if they were willing to work, they would not know how. Their training and education have utterly unfitted them

One of these rogues had the impudence to steal and pocket a biscuit under the king's eyes. Louis the Grand was already in a bad humour on account of another matter, and he was so incensed with the rascally servant who did not have manners enough to postpone the theft until the monarch's back was turned, that he lifted his cane and belaboured the said servant then and there until the cane was broken in pieces.

Somehow we warm to the outraged monarch as we read of this performance. It is almost the only occasion where we see etiquette laid aside, and human

Meanwhile asserting its primary impulses.

Colbert adopted the king some 15,000 persons were facturer from foreign competition by tariff duties, his purpose being to enrich the manufacturer and encourage him, by giving him a monopoly of the home market. Colbert made no pretence of legislating to benefit the labourer. With perfect frankness he declared his purpose to be the protection of French capital against the competition of capital from abroad.

Under this protective system, which gave him a monopoly, the manufacturer of France had become rich. He now began to buy land, and he resented more angrily, every year, the scorn with which the idle, empty-headed, and debt-laden noble looked down upon him, the successful man of business.

The manufacturer is not the only man of the middle class who has been prospering. The tradesmen who supply the careless and profligate nobles have been earning immense profits. Collusion between the confidential servants of the palaces, and the people who furnish supplies for their lordly masters, enriches both

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St. Simon relates a curious anecdote of the theft of a lot of laces from off the king's carriage, almost in his very presence. Other authorities tell us that it was a regular thing for the servants to sell dishes from the king's table to the people of Versailles.

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Somehow we warm to the outraged monarch as we read of this performance. It is almost the only occasion where we see etiquette laid aside, and human nature asserting its primary impulses.

At the court of the king some 15,000 persons were supported at the public expense, absorbing one-tenth of the national revenue. This nest of harpies increases and encroaches until, under Louis XV., they actually devour one-fourth of the income of the State.

In the Church the word duty was likewise sorely neglected. The clergy owned enormous estates from which they drew princely revenues. The cardinals, bishops and abbés were the nobility of the ecclesiastical order, while the curates who did all the work were its peasants. The bishop dashed along the highway in his gilded coach, and the curate crouched close to the bank to keep from being trampled into the mud.

The curates and parish priests were worked hard, shabbily clad, ill fed, and wretchedly housed, while the princes of the Church aped the princes of the State and lived, like them, in idleness, extravagance, and dissipation.

Here and there are exceptions to what we have said of the nobility and the Church. In La Vendée and a few other places the nobles reside on their estates, mingle with

the people, and retain their respect and affection. In the same province as well as in some other districts, the Church remembers its mission and the people are faithful to it. This loyalty of the masses to their natural leaders in those provinces where the nobles had been loyal to their duty was strikingly shown during the Revolution of 1789.

The Ancien Régime, then, was the concentration of all political power in the hands of the king; the subjection of the nobles into a servile band of place-hunting sycophants, and the complete subjection of the masses of the people, socially, politically, and religiously.

Reduced to its last analysis, the system of Louis XIV. rested upon the assumption that the kingdom of France was an estate which God had given to the king; that the nobles were the personal attendants necessary to his glory and comfort; and that the great mass of the people were the serfs whom God had ordained to labour upon his estate of France as long as the world should stand, and to produce from it, by their toil, an exhaustless supply of every good thing needful to the king, his nobles, his priests, and his concubines.

CHAPTER XXXV

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH; HIS COURT; HIS ADMINISTRATION

THOSE to whom the study of different systems of government is interesting find permanent attraction in the reign of Louis XIV. Under his rule France furnished a perfect example of the absolute monarchy. If to judge a tree by its fruits be a fair rule to apply to states and systems, the monarchical principle is on trial when the age of Louis XIV. is judged, for throughout all the departments of administration the king's will was law. No one else had the power to propose, to decree, to direct, or to veto. No power of initiative, of limitation, or of obstruction existed. What the king said was law, what the king did was right.

It is not just to judge any system by its results on a decayed people, or by its fruits under unfavourable circumstances. In passing judgment upon the monarchical system as exemplified in the person and government of Louis XIV., we give it the advantage of unusually favourable circumstances.

France was not a decayed nation, her people had been kept in a state of suppression, but the energy of the State, as shown in the courage with which all Europe was thrice resisted, only needed room for development.

Again, the local surroundings were most favourable. Monarchies existed on every side of France, and the

Catholic Church maintained the monarchical principle with all its vast influence. The altar and the throne supported each other.

Then, again, the personal character of the king gave to the system the last requisite to a fair test. He was not one of those rulers whose bad habits or bad character call down odium upon the system he represents. On the contrary, Louis XIV. may fairly be called a model king. He lived up to his ideal. He was just what the adorers of absolute monarchy wished him to be. In his own day they reverenced him as the most perfect type of the enlightened, courteous, and magnificent monarch which modern times had produced. Even now, the pens of royalist Catholic authors are busy writing elaborate eulogies of the Grand Monarch; and book after book is printed to convince the world that Louis was great, was good, was a wise ruler, and a sincere Christian; was generous, humane, enlightened, progressive, and conscientious.

The best and the worst that the candid historian can say of Louis XIV. is that he and his system were equally good and equally bad. Heredity, education, and local environment made him what he was, — a man of form and ceremony, a slave to court etiquette. From the moment he opened his eyes in the morning till he closed them again at night, he was held in the remorseless grip of a rigid ceremonial. His nightgown had to be taken off in pursuance of fixed rule; his shirt had to be given him by the proper person in the proper way; his hands had to be washed according to established order. Some grandees, and not others, had the high privilege of handing him his socks. His breeches had to be offered with imposing formality. To give him his wig or his coat was a dis-

tinguished honour which only a few of the elect enjoyed. Having dressed according to etiquette, Louis went about the day's business or pleasure, still in strict observance of rules. He gave audience as the forms directed; ate, drank, walked, talked, rode, and hunted, by fixed and unbending precedent. When he went to bed at night, the same elaborate slavery to form pursued him. The man could not pull off his shirt without strictest obedience to established rule. The Duke of Duck-puddle contended eagerly with the Marquis of Bootlick and the Baron of Bosh for the precious privilege of holding the candle while some other proud scions of the nobility pulled off the imperial breeches. Even after he was in bed, the poor prisoner of royal etiquette could not escape into privacy. One of his attendants slept in the same room, and the light burned all night.

Thus we see that Louis XIV. was held in the vise of system. The nation could not escape, nor could he. He was a part of it, and was mastered by it, at the same time that he played master of it.

The king grew to realize this fact himself. He built Marly to have a quiet retreat wherein he could enjoy life as a private gentleman. But the attempt was a failure. The court and its slavery of ceremony pursued him. He could no more escape from his faithful courtiers and parasites than a congress or legislature can hide from the lobby.

Therefore, we say that Louis XIV. and his system must be judged together. Louis XIV. was not the guilty inventor of this system. He found the machine already made. From the time of Philip the Handsome, the French kings had, almost without exception, been travel-

ling toward absolutism. Charles VII. had practised it. So had Louis XI. Under Francis I., guided by Cardinal Duprat, the royal will had been the law of the land. The civil wars had weakened royal authority under the last of the Valois kings, but Henry IV. was a despiser of popular rights, and was rapidly rebuilding the shattered fabric of absolutism when he was assassinated. Under Louis XIII., Richelieu had completely restored the edifice, and when Louis XIV. took the reins from Mazarin he found no obstacles in his way. Even before Mazarin died, the Parliament of Paris had been practically snuffed out. The body, having been directed by the cardinal to register some decree or other, refused to obey. The young king, who was only sixteen, appeared before the Parliament, dressed for a hunt, booted and spurred, whip in hand, and ordered peremptorily that the decree in question should be registered forthwith. It was registered, accordingly, and the Parliament after that became a law-court only.

As to the States General, it had become obsolete. No governing body existed save the king and his ministers. The first act of Louis' reign was to dispense with ministers. Thus he was in fact the State. He legislated, he executed, he administered. He had found, ready to his hand, a complete mechanism of absolute government. His only departure from the practice of his predecessor was that he determined to run the machine for himself, instead of letting ministers do it for him. It being admitted that Louis was a king of considerable ability, and of great industry, and one who did his best to live up to the duties of his position as he understood them, what was the result, so far as France was concerned? What

were the fruits of this splendid, full-grown tree of absolutism?

At the time of Louis' death the public debt of France was 2,400,000,000 livres, — immensely larger than it ever had been. The revenues had been mortgaged for four years ahead, and the royal treasury had paid as high as 400 per cent for borrowed money. New taxes had been created and the old burdens increased. Bread riots had broken out in many parts of the kingdom, and nothing but the huge standing army kept down a revolt.

From the official reports made to Louis XIV. himself by his intendants, we may learn quite enough to convince us of the extreme misery of the people.

In all of them the story is much the same: "War, disease, the quartering of the troops, forced labour, heavy duties, and the emigration of the Huguenots have ruined this province."

The roads and bridges were in a deplorable condition, and trade reduced to nothing. The frontier provinces were still further overwhelmed by requisitions and by marauding soldiers, who, receiving neither pay nor rations, foraged for their wages. In the district around Rouen, 650,000 out of the 700,000 inhabitants had nothing but straw to sleep on. The peasants in certain provinces had lapsed into a savage state, living frequently on herbs and roots like the beasts, and, being wild as savages, would flee when approached.

The philosopher Locke, who travelled in France in 1676 and 1677, wrote: "The rent of lands in France has fallen one-half in these few years, by reason of the poverty of the people."

Sir William Temple, about the same time says, "The

French peasantry are wholly dispirited by labour and want." In 1708, Addison writes, "We think that France is on her last legs."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, writing from Paris, in October, 1718, says: "I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery; and all the country villages of France show nothing else. While the post-horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg, with such miserable starved faces, and thin, tattered clothes, they need no other eloquence to convince one of the wretchedness of their condition."

"I have known in France poor people to sell their beds, and lie upon straw," says Somers; "sell their pots, kettles, and all their necessary household goods, to content the unmerciful collector of the king's taxes."

In Burton's diary it is stated (1691) that there were "all the dismal indications of an overwhelming calamity. The fields were uncultivated, the villages unpeopled, the houses dropping to decay."

Dr. Lister, who visited Paris in 1698, says: "Such is the vast multitude of poor wretches in all parts of this city, that whether a person is in a carriage or on foot, in the street, or even in a shop, he is alike unable to transact business, on account of the importunities of the beggars."

It is a tremendous fact that at the end of the reign of Louis XIV. the population of France was less than it had been at his accession seventy-two years before, while from 1715, when he died, to 1785 the population increased thirty-three per cent, and commerce five hundred per cent.

The Duke of St. Simon, as proud an aristocrat as ever lived, wrote his Memoirs day by day, as the reign of

Louis progressed. He was one of the elect. His father had been a favourite page of Louis' father, and had been made a duke because he had, in a flash of inspiration, hit upon a way to get a fresh horse between the royal legs without compelling the royal feet to touch the ground. Louis XIII. was ravenously fond of hunting; a change of horses was frequently necessary; the king did not like the delay and the trouble of dismounting and remounting. The lucky page bethinks him of bringing the fresh horse alongside the jaded one, the head of the one to the tail of the other, so that the royal legs have only to execute a neat whirl from the one saddle to the other — no delay, no trouble, no feet on ground, and on rushes the royal huntsman after the antlered stag.

Genius like that of his page must be rewarded. The hero of a sea-fight might die in obscurity and want; poets, philosophers, and statesmen might pine in dim, squalid neglect; the king's own mother might be shivering, a lonely exile, in the wretched garret in Cologne — but this page, having ministered to the pleasure of his lord, must straightway be lifted into the magic circles of privilege and favour. He is made a duke, and lives long to enjoy health, wealth, and worldly honours.

His son married a lady of noble birth, and, after a brief service in the army, he took up his residence at court. He and his wife occupied grand apartments in the palace. He wrote his Memoirs while acting as a favoured courtier of the king: hence his pen-pictures of passing events are worthy of very high consideration.

Writing of the year 1710, St. Simon says that the distress of the king and the people was extreme. There was no money in circulation. The markets were flooded

At any rate, it is undeniable that Madame de Maintenon was for thirty years obedient to the will of the priests, and that the gloom and the persecution of the king's later years are largely chargeable to her; for almost immediately after their marriage Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes, and the horrors of religious persecution were inaugurated. In all history, there is not a record more painful to read than that which relates the hideous barbarities which frenzied mobs, hounded on by fanatical priests, and sanctioned by bigoted officials of the State, inflicted upon the Protestants of France. Brutal soldiers were thrown into the hunt to add their bestialities to the carnival of crime. Daughters were violated and wives were ravished. Many a victim was stripped naked, slashed with knives, stuck full of pins, the nose wrenched away with red-hot pincers, nails pulled off the fingers, the feet burnt with hot irons — all to further conversion to the state Church.

In the orgy of barbarous cruelty and fanaticism France lost a million of her industrious citizens, sent away into other lands the trade secrets which were then hers alone, filled the armies of her enemies with desperate refugees who fought her to the death, and well-nigh paralyzed all branches of her commerce.

Surely Louis XV. never paid any such price for his Pompadour and Du Barry as Louis XIV. paid for his Maintenon.

Louis XV. is justly reproached for having gone to war with Frederick of Prussia because that monarch had spoken disdainfully of the Pompadour. But it seems equally clear that Louis XIV. went to war with all Europe because he and Louvois had a dispute about the

size of a window. The story goes that Louis detected a want of correspondence in the size of two windows in the palace of Versailles, then in course of construction. He called the attention of Louvois to this defect. Louvois denied the discrepancy. This angered the king, and to settle the question, the window was measured. The defect existed. Louvois retreated abashed, filled with uneasiness. The king's loss of favour might follow, — and then one might as well be dead.

"I must get up a war to divert his attention, and to make me necessary to him," said Louvois, he being the acknowledged greatest of war ministers.

So Louvois fanned the fire in the Cologne electorate squabble, and saw to it that the flames of war mounted high. The king's mind became very sufficiently occupied, his great War Minister was indispensable, the window wrangle was forgotten.

So the story goes. Perhaps there is no truth in it, but it is as well supported by evidence as the story that Louis XV. involved France in ruinous war because of Pompadour's resentment against Frederick for a gibe of his.

The indifference of Louis XV. to the sufferings of the people has been condemned; but I do not find that any tale of woe ever touched the feelings of Louis XIV., unless the trouble was within his immediate circle. He had no breadth of sympathy, no paternal solicitude for the people in mass.

When it is reported to him that the people of Dauphiny, in 1675, are reduced to a diet of acorns, roots, grass, and bark, he does not retrench his expenditures, lower the taxes, or send relief. He leaves nature to take care of the case. In 1682 it is officially reported that in Poitou

the people have been without bread for two years. In 1692, 70,000 persons in Limoges are living on chestnuts and alms. In Normandy (1693) the peasants were dying of hunger; provision trains were attacked and plundered by starving men and women, who are in such wretched plight that they have almost lost the likeness of human beings.

None of these reports gave Louis XIV. any sorrow; none of them provoked remedial legislation; none of them caused taxes to be reduced or the court expenditures lowered. The people might scuffle along as best they could on chestnuts, acorns, roots, grass, and alms, — but to the Grand Monarch no hint of self-denial must ever be made.

All the property of all the people is his. He has thought so, the doctors of divinity have so decided, and his confessor confirms the belief. Wherefore, let his subjects be thankful that he does not take all that they have, it all being his.

There must be no lack of splendour at the court, no matter how they starve in the provinces. Versailles must blaze with diamonds, blossom with silks, resound with music, and reek with the odour of lamps of incense burning night and day before the great king. There must be plays and operas three times a week. There must be a ball every Saturday. In one room of the palace musicians must always be playing for those who love music; in another for those who will dance. Gaming tables are kept in perpetual readiness for those who will gamble.

Refreshments of food and wine must be ready at all hours, night and day.

And there must be fêtes and carousals in the park,

jousts and tourneys, gay gondola parties on the grand canal, masked balls within the palace, and brilliant festivities at every marriage or other notable felicity in the charmed circle of the privileged.

"This is enchanted ground," says Royalty, "and Want shall not intrude its hungry features here." "Let *us* eat, drink, and be merry — how it fares with the balance of you we neither know nor care."

And the king, having said this, — not in words, but in deeds, — struts grandly in to his dinner, to the music of twenty-four fiddles. Not a single fiddler will our Grand Monarch dispense with, no matter what may be the condition of his people.

The primary cause which brought on the Revolution of 1789 was the Public Debt and the Deficit. This Public Debt and this Deficit were two of the heirlooms which the Grand Monarch handed down to his hapless successors. He spent the money and they had the bills to meet. They could not pay the debt, nor the interest upon it, and the French Monarchy went down under the accumulated burden of misrule, feeble administration, unjust laws, and a bankrupt treasury, — all of which troubles Louis XIV. had majestically transmitted to his feeble descendants.

So profound was the self-esteem in which this preposterous egotist lapped himself, that even the supple knees of professional courtiers were severely taxed. A new language of adoration had to be invented. The most extravagant expressions of admiration grew to be commonplace, and the talent of self-abasement was reduced to a fine art by the demands made upon it by the colossal vanity of this pompous despot.

One courtier, who had been banished for a time, said to the king on his return: "When banished from your Majesty, one is not only unhappy, but is ridiculous."

Another courtier erected a monument in Paris upon which Louis XIV. was represented as leading all the nations of Europe in chains.

When the statue of the king was dedicated in the Place of Victories at Paris, the governor of the city, accompanied by all the officials and civic bodies, solemnly marched around it in state, and prostrated themselves before it in true barbaric style.

We exemplars of Christian civilization are the most puzzling of human creatures. We cannot tolerate heathen rites, performed by the heathen; we exterminate the heathen, but we perpetuate his rites. Both in Church and State we constantly do what the pagans did. We worship as gods those whom we revere as saints or heroes — those who are better than we are, or those who are stronger than we are.

At Poitiers a statue of the king was erected, and its inscriptions declared that Louis was the arbiter of war and peace, an immortal hero, and the joy of the world. The orator of the occasion, at the unveiling of the statue, drew a comparison between Louis and God, in which the advantage was rather grudgingly yielded to God. The king was much pleased with the address and appointed the speaker a member of the Academy.

So far was this spirit of deification carried that the courtier, passing through the royal bedchamber, would make a deep bow to the bed; and a similar reverence before the aigrette, — the silver vessel in which the king's napkins and knife and fork were kept.

Louis XIV. to the Frenchman of his day represented God on earth in political affairs, just as the Pope represented Him in spiritual affairs.

The mystic halo of the doctrine of "Divine Right" sanctified and elevated him as a man apart from other men — infinitely higher, stronger, wiser. Had he not been anointed with the sacred oil brought from heaven by a dove? The Church said so; the State said so; it were treason to doubt it. No good Catholic did doubt it. Or if he did, had no remarks to make.

Did he not perform miraculous cures, by virtue of the divine grace imparted to him, by simply touching the afflicted, as Christ touched them? Church and State both said he did, and the afflicted crowded forward to be touched and miraculously healed.

CHAPTER XXXIV

DEATH OF THE GRAND MONARCH, AND SKETCH OF THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

FOR seventy odd years Louis has lived and reigned, but now the end draws nigh. Not all the divinity that doth hedge a king can intimidate that remorseless conqueror called Old Age.

The household troops may parade, the bugles blare, the fiddles ring, the fountains play, the gardens blossom,
A.D. 1715 the courtiers bow and scrape, fawn and flatter, but Louis bends beneath the burden of the years, and spiders weave betwixt him and the sun.

He has the grandest palace in all the world, set down amidst the loveliest gardens, fountains, and park. His treasury had been exhausted in rearing this marble abode, in creating this sylvan paradise. It has cost France very dearly, this Versailles. In money it cost $150,000,000, and nobody knows how many lives; for when the soldiers were set to work to drain marshes and cut canals for its water-supply, they died like flies, and the dead were carted off each night to their nameless graves.

And when at last the formal walks had all been laid, and the noble trees from Fontainebleau transplanted in regular order, the parterres created, the hedges set, and the fountains put in motion, Louis had asked his Montespan if the work was not perfect.

"It only needs a snowfall, so that we could sleigh-ride along the grand avenues in the glorious park," answered the woman.

Louis said nothing, but that night the avenues of the park for miles were covered with snowy salt and sugar, and the king's harlot, in company with the king and the gorgeous miscellany of the court, went sleighing over the whitened roads, the bells jingling silvery music, and the favourites jingling light chatter and lighter laughter as they whirled along.

That was many years ago. The king was young then, and so was the Montespan.

His youth has long since left him, and his Montespan, after he grew tired of her, he put aside. She has been dead these many years.

In his vast palace Louis now awaits the end. He has lost children, friends, glory. The only human being who ever loved him, Louise de la Vallière, died heartbroken in a convent years ago, driven from the court by the intrigues of more mercenary rivals. He has lost his illusions. He knows how little he now counts for in the great world. He knows that sporting men in Holland and elsewhere are laying bets as to his living out the year, just as they would bet on the speed of a horse or the turn of a card.

He knows that Time has disfigured his person, and he rouges his cheek, pads his clothing, and hides his swelling ankles and legs.

Very lonely must Louis have felt, for he knew that the people already hated his name, wished his death, and would curse his memory. He knew that the courtiers longed for a new reign, and for the gayety and license

which the old monarch and his priests had suppressed during these later years.

By the side of the aged king sits his Maintenon, a wrinkled but sensible old woman of eighty years. She governs the king, and an old Jesuit priest governs her.

What a picture it is! All France has been drained in this direction for three generations. All the power, all the privilege, all the culture, all the revenues, have been drawn to the king and his court as far as law could effect it.

Here is the worn-out monarch waiting for the knock of him who knocks at the door of the palace and of the hut, callously impartial; and around that dying king goes on the same comedy of human greed which marks the death of the merest chattel-owning peasant.

By right of birth and precedent, Louis, Duke of Orleans, nephew of the king, is entitled to the regency during the minority of Louis XV.

But the Duke of Maine, bastard son of Louis XIV. by the Montespan, wants the regency for himself, and the Maintenon sides with him.

Thus the dying king is beset by a domestic intrigue, and sees no peace. The royal family is bent upon forcing him to make a will favourable to the Duke of Maine. They tease and torment the feeble monarch, pout at him, urge him, assail him with tears and persuasions, until he is fairly beaten. To secure peace, to enjoy the smiles of his own family circle again, he makes the will, warning them, however, that it will not be respected after his death.

All his life Louis had been acting a part. Everything he did was done according to fixed and inexorable rule.

He was formal, conventional, studied in look, in word, in gesture, in act. One who had seen him take wine at thirty years of age could safely swear to the exact manner in which he would take wine at the age of sixty. The weather being the same, one could make affidavit to the precise hour when Louis, cane in hand, could be seen strutting impressively along the avenues of the park of Versailles. At the same time every day the king took his meals, his walks, held his receptions, his councils, his levees, had his evening amusements, and went to bed.

Always and everywhere he was an actor, — acting the part of a great king. So morbid was his fondness for the theatrical side of his great office that his courtiers played upon it boldly and successfully. They even amused the old man with sham embassies, and his insane vanity was immensely gratified at the fulsome flatteries which appeared to come from the most distant quarters of the globe, when in fact they were composed by the courtiers at Versailles.

A few days before Louis died he was regaled by a sham embassy from Persia. The dying monarch arrayed himself in all his splendour, blazed in regal lustre from a gorgeous throne, listened to a pompous address from a pretended Persian ambassador, and retired exhausted, but pleased — never suspecting the fraud, and never to appear in public on a state occasion again.

In the article of death Louis was true to himself. He died as a great king should die. We cannot say that he rehearsed the part, as the Emperor Charles V. did, but no man ever died more correctly, composedly, and impressively.

He showed decent regret for past errors, but no abject contrition; he admitted just enough error to show that he consented to be considered human.

He accepted all the consolations of the Church, according to rule.

He called in his family, and made appropriate speeches to them. He sent for his successor, the little Louis XV., who was five years old, and made him a speech, which the boy could not have understood.

And then he turned to his faithful Maintenon, and spoke of their meeting in the next world, and regretted that he had not made her happier in this.

A.D. 1715 Having thus in the most correct manner made his bow to the world, the old man fell to praying to his God, and so died.

Madame de Maintenon, the unacknowledged wife and unacknowledged widow, left the palace before her husband had breathed his last. The courtiers wished her away. She retired to St. Cyr, a convent she had founded, and there she spent the remainder of her life in devotion and good works.

In 1717, Peter the Great, sojourning in France, went to visit so celebrated a woman. He found her in bed.

Pulling the curtains aside, Peter looked at her long and earnestly.

"Of what disease do you suffer?" asked he.

"Of old age," she answered.

He silently drew the curtains together, and departed.

She died in 1719, aged eighty-three.

Before quitting Louis XIV., let us see just what his system of government was.

It has already been said that he inherited this system

from his ancestors, and their ministers. From Richelieu, particularly, he derived the principle he put into practice. For seventy years the governmental machine was developed and perfected, and when Louis XIV. died, the ANCIEN RÉGIME was complete.

What was the Ancien Régime?

In matters political, all power was concentrated in the king. He, personally, was the government. He, in theory, was the proprietor of France. Her property was his. The taxes simply represented the proportion of his own which he was pleased to exact. In theory he could take it all if he wished.

There was no legislature. No lawmaking body intervened between him and his subjects. His will was law. His decrees were statutes. The only formality required was that the Parliament of Paris should register them on its records. And the Parliament registered whenever the king wished it.

The king made war and peace, contracted foreign alliances, coined money, and regulated commerce. The king raised armies, and disbanded them; imposed taxes, created offices, and suspended laws. Even in local affairs, he alone was master.

In every department he had his intendant, or overseer; and this royal intendant rode over local councils and local lords, subjecting all local authority to the king's authority. The nobility saw itself reduced to political impotence, all power being centralized in the person of the king.

The king then was supreme over nobles and people, but the nobles still enjoyed privileges which lifted them unmeasurably above the people.

They paid almost none of the taxes. The château of the noble, and the land around it, his woods, meadows, vineyards, ponds, and pleasure grounds could not be sold for taxes. Of the income and capitation tax, he paid a part, but his influence with the authorities was so great that his payments were little more than nominal.

For instance, the princes of the blood held two-twentieths of the national property, and were assessed for that proportion of taxes. They should therefore have paid 2,400,000 livres of the annual taxes. The amount they did pay was but 188,000.

Only a noble could hunt and kill game, fish, or keep a dove-cote. Only a noble could rise in the army, or in the higher offices of the Church. To the noble, after the king, belonged the power of wringing taxes from the people. The noble collected bridge duties, market duties, first fruits of the wine crop, dues for the oven, the mill, the wine-press.

In his immediate councils, where he wanted effective service and implicit obedience, the king rarely employed nobles. It was not his policy to encourage the growth of political power in the nobles, as compared to the power of the crown. Therefore commoners, who would be entirely dependent upon the royal favour, were appointed to the councils and to the position of intendant.

The people paid the king's taxes and the lord's dues, and got no accounting from either. None of the taxes wrung from the people were spent on the people. The king and the nobles spent it as they pleased. None of it was expended in public education for the commoners, none of it in improvements beneficial to the masses. The money wrung from a peasant by the sale of his pots and

ploughs was spent in aimless luxury at Versailles. Tillers of the soil famished while 300 cooks baked, broiled, stewed, and fricasseed to feast the 4000 parasites, courtesans, and place-hunters who infested the royal palace. Artisans hungered for bread in every street in the cities of France, while 3000 horses stood in the king's stables eating their heads off. Thousands of acres of the best land in France were being deserted because the burdens of feudal dues and royal taxes had literally crushed hope and effort, while the fickle taste of the king was pouring millions of treasure into the new palaces and grounds of Versailles and Marly, and was squandering other millions in paying the gambling debts of loose women and rakish men.

What the king was doing at Versailles and Marly the nobles were doing upon a smaller scale at their châteaux, when they could tear themselves away from the court.

There were hundreds of great feudal castle-palaces scattered about France, where all the senseless extravagance of the king was faithfully imitated, and where the horses lived in parlours and where the peasants lived in stables, where the dogs fed sumptuously three times a day, and the serfs who worked the fields rarely got enough black rye bread to quiet the pangs of hunger.

The immense privileges enjoyed by the nobles had once gone hand in hand with duties. The lord of the castle had defended the land from invaders, shielded the peasant from the robber, sheltered him in time of war, and aided him with tools, horses, and supplies in time of peace. In those days the noble was the champion. He fought the battles of his people. He met the enemy on the frontier. He went ever with his armour on, his sword by his side,

his spur on his heel. His horse saddled in his hall stood ready to go at the word.

Protecting the soil and the toilers in this valiant fashion, the noble acquired just rights over both, and exacted justly a support from those who worked while he watched and fought.

And as long as the noble was the champion of the people they paid him his dues cheerfully, looked up to him, loved him, were ready to die for him. When an heir was born to him every hill on his domains blazed with the bonfires of joy, — the champion of the people had an heir who would in turn be their champion!

In like manner the lord of the castle cleared the woods of dangerous game; therefore he naturally became the sole hunter. He alone could build the bridge; therefore he took toll. He alone could afford the cost of the oven, the wine-press, and the mill; therefore it was not strange that he should bake for his people and get some of the bread, grind for his people and get some of the grist, crush the grapes and get some of the wine.

Thus privileges and dues grew out of duties and services rendered. As long as these duties were performed or services rendered, no hardship was felt in paying the feudal dues.

But when the noble no longer watched or fought, no longer performed any duties whatsoever, or rendered the people any service at all, was it right that feudal dues should still be exacted?

When other mills, wine-presses, bridges, and ovens had been established, was it right to deny the people the freedom of going to them? When the peasant wanted to crush his few grains of rye or wheat between two stones,

at his own wretched hut, was it right for the noble to exact a license-fee for that poor privilege?

Did the game-laws ever go to such a pitch of insanity as they reached under the Ancien Régime, when it was made a crime for a peasant to enclose his crop to protect it from the deer and wild hogs? Such enclosures were adjudged to be an interference with the pleasures of the chase, were torn down, and the owner punished.

In many parts of the kingdom he had to watch his orchards, vineyards, and growing grain, all night as well as all day, to save them from herds of deer and droves of wild hogs. In the parish of Vaux alone, an official report shows that the rabbits in one season destroyed the crops of 7000 acres of land. The vineyards, the orchards, even the young poplars, were devoured by troops of deer. In the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau, the people had to employ gangs of watchmen to guard the vines from May until mid-October.

Four hundred square leagues of territory in France were subject to the control of the "captainries," that is, "game preserves." In these captainries the proprietors of the soil had no right to take or kill game. The proprietor of the soil, in his mere character of owner, had no right to plant hedges, dig ditches, or build fences, without special permission. Such hedges, ditches, and fences tended to interfere with the "pleasures of the chase," and could not be tolerated. The owner of the soil was not allowed to keep firearms. He was not even allowed to be followed by a dog, unless the dog was held by a leash. Between May 1 and June 24 he was not allowed to go into his own field; and he was forbidden to mow his grass before St. John's day. The reason was that the

partridges are hatching, and he might disturb them, thus interfering with my lord's "pleasures of the chase" again.

So carefully did the law encourage or protect wild animals at the expense of the peasants that they were accustomed to exclaim, whenever they saw a herd of deer, "Yonder goes the nobility!"

Among the nobles themselves the influence of the Ancien Régime was most destructive. It made life hollow and artificial, selfish and hypocritical. False standards ruled, and the natural was held to be the vulgar.

Husbands and wives were no longer faithful to one another. Married couples were rarely seen together. Children were almost strangers to their parents. Etiquette interposed its icy hands between mother and daughter, father and son.

The nobles affected to disdain business. It was considered aristocratic to be ignorant of matters of account, estate management, and commercial dealings.

A natural result was that the nobles became bankrupt, their estates went to pieces, and the men of the lower orders began to accumulate wealth, and to buy land more rapidly than they had ever done before.

Living in wasteful luxury, spending always and earning never, they sink into poverty. Huge debts encumber the feudal domains; little by little the lord of the manor sells off his surplus lands, and the rich tradesman, or miserly farmer, or thrifty lawyer of the Third Estate buys it.

The nobles are too proud to work. They will endure any privation rather than thus lower themselves. Even if they were willing to work, they would not know how. Their training and education have utterly unfitted them

One of these rogues had the impudence to steal and pocket a biscuit under the king's eyes. Louis the Grand was already in a bad humour on account of another matter, and he was so incensed with the rascally servant who did not have manners enough to postpone the theft until the monarch's back was turned, that he lifted his cane and belaboured the said servant then and there until the cane was broken in pieces.

Somehow we warm to the outraged monarch as we read of this performance. It is almost the only occasion where we see etiquette laid aside, and human nature asserting its primary impulses.

At the court of the king some 15,000 persons were supported at the public expense, absorbing one-tenth of the national revenue. This nest of harpies increases and encroaches until, under Louis XV., they actually devour one-fourth of the income of the State.

In the Church the word duty was likewise sorely neglected. The clergy owned enormous estates from which they drew princely revenues. The cardinals, bishops and abbés were the nobility of the ecclesiastical order, while the curates who did all the work were its peasants. The bishop dashed along the highway in his gilded coach, and the curate crouched close to the bank to keep from being trampled into the mud.

The curates and parish priests were worked hard, shabbily clad, ill fed, and wretchedly housed, while the princes of the Church aped the princes of the State and lived, like them, in idleness, extravagance, and dissipation.

Here and there are exceptions to what we have said of the nobility and the Church. In La Vendée and a few other places the nobles reside on their estates, mingle with

the people, and retain their respect and affection. In the same province as well as in some other districts, the Church remembers its mission and the people are faithful to it. This loyalty of the masses to their natural leaders in those provinces where the nobles had been loyal to their duty was strikingly shown during the Revolution of 1789.

The Ancien Régime, then, was the concentration of all political power in the hands of the king; the subjection of the nobles into a servile band of place-hunting sycophants, and the complete subjection of the masses of the people, socially, politically, and religiously.

Reduced to its last analysis, the system of Louis XIV. rested upon the assumption that the kingdom of France was an estate which God had given to the king; that the nobles were the personal attendants necessary to his glory and comfort; and that the great mass of the people were the serfs whom God had ordained to labour upon his estate of France as long as the world should stand, and to produce from it, by their toil, an exhaustless supply of every good thing needful to the king, his nobles, his priests, and his concubines.

CHAPTER XXXV

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH; HIS COURT; HIS ADMINISTRATION

THOSE to whom the study of different systems of government is interesting find permanent attraction in the reign of Louis XIV. Under his rule France furnished a perfect example of the absolute monarchy. If to judge a tree by its fruits be a fair rule to apply to states and systems, the monarchical principle is on trial when the age of Louis XIV. is judged, for throughout all the departments of administration the king's will was law. No one else had the power to propose, to decree, to direct, or to veto. No power of initiative, of limitation, or of obstruction existed. What the king said was law, what the king did was right.

It is not just to judge any system by its results on a decayed people, or by its fruits under unfavourable circumstances. In passing judgment upon the monarchical system as exemplified in the person and government of Louis XIV., we give it the advantage of unusually favourable circumstances.

France was not a decayed nation, her people had been kept in a state of suppression, but the energy of the State, as shown in the courage with which all Europe was thrice resisted, only needed room for development.

Again, the local surroundings were most favourable. Monarchies existed on every side of France, and the

Catholic Church maintained the monarchical principle with all its vast influence. The altar and the throne supported each other.

Then, again, the personal character of the king gave to the system the last requisite to a fair test. He was not one of those rulers whose bad habits or bad character call down odium upon the system he represents. On the contrary, Louis XIV. may fairly be called a model king. He lived up to his ideal. He was just what the adorers of absolute monarchy wished him to be. In his own day they reverenced him as the most perfect type of the enlightened, courteous, and magnificent monarch which modern times had produced. Even now, the pens of royalist Catholic authors are busy writing elaborate eulogies of the Grand Monarch; and book after book is printed to convince the world that Louis was great, was good, was a wise ruler, and a sincere Christian; was generous, humane, enlightened, progressive, and conscientious.

The best and the worst that the candid historian can say of Louis XIV. is that he and his system were equally good and equally bad. Heredity, education, and local environment made him what he was, — a man of form and ceremony, a slave to court etiquette. From the moment he opened his eyes in the morning till he closed them again at night, he was held in the remorseless grip of a rigid ceremonial. His nightgown had to be taken off in pursuance of fixed rule; his shirt had to be given him by the proper person in the proper way; his hands had to be washed according to established order. Some grandees, and not others, had the high privilege of handing him his socks. His breeches had to be offered with imposing formality. To give him his wig or his coat was a dis-

tinguished honour which only a few of the elect enjoyed. Having dressed according to etiquette, Louis went about the day's business or pleasure, still in strict observance of rules. He gave audience as the forms directed; ate, drank, walked, talked, rode, and hunted, by fixed and unbending precedent. When he went to bed at night, the same elaborate slavery to form pursued him. The man could not pull off his shirt without strictest obedience to established rule. The Duke of Duck-puddle contended eagerly with the Marquis of Bootlick and the Baron of Bosh for the precious privilege of holding the candle while some other proud scions of the nobility pulled off the imperial breeches. Even after he was in bed, the poor prisoner of royal etiquette could not escape into privacy. One of his attendants slept in the same room, and the light burned all night.

Thus we see that Louis XIV. was held in the vise of system. The nation could not escape, nor could he. He was a part of it, and was mastered by it, at the same time that he played master of it.

The king grew to realize this fact himself. He built Marly to have a quiet retreat wherein he could enjoy life as a private gentleman. But the attempt was a failure. The court and its slavery of ceremony pursued him. He could no more escape from his faithful courtiers and parasites than a congress or legislature can hide from the lobby.

Therefore, we say that Louis XIV. and his system must be judged together. Louis XIV. was not the guilty inventor of this system. He found the machine already made. From the time of Philip the Handsome, the French kings had, almost without exception, been travel-

ling toward absolutism. Charles VII. had practised it. So had Louis XI. Under Francis I., guided by Cardinal Duprat, the royal will had been the law of the land. The civil wars had weakened royal authority under the last of the Valois kings, but Henry IV. was a despiser of popular rights, and was rapidly rebuilding the shattered fabric of absolutism when he was assassinated. Under Louis XIII., Richelieu had completely restored the edifice, and when Louis XIV. took the reins from Mazarin he found no obstacles in his way. Even before Mazarin died, the Parliament of Paris had been practically snuffed out. The body, having been directed by the cardinal to register some decree or other, refused to obey. The young king, who was only sixteen, appeared before the Parliament, dressed for a hunt, booted and spurred, whip in hand, and ordered peremptorily that the decree in question should be registered forthwith. It was registered, accordingly, and the Parliament after that became a law-court only.

As to the States General, it had become obsolete. No governing body existed save the king and his ministers. The first act of Louis' reign was to dispense with ministers. Thus he was in fact the State. He legislated, he executed, he administered. He had found, ready to his hand, a complete mechanism of absolute government. His only departure from the practice of his predecessor was that he determined to run the machine for himself, instead of letting ministers do it for him. It being admitted that Louis was a king of considerable ability, and of great industry, and one who did his best to live up to the duties of his position as he understood them, what was the result, so far as France was concerned? What

were the fruits of this splendid, full-grown tree of absolutism?

At the time of Louis' death the public debt of France was 2,400,000,000 livres, — immensely larger than it ever had been. The revenues had been mortgaged for four years ahead, and the royal treasury had paid as high as 400 per cent for borrowed money. New taxes had been created and the old burdens increased. Bread riots had broken out in many parts of the kingdom, and nothing but the huge standing army kept down a revolt.

From the official reports made to Louis XIV. himself by his intendants, we may learn quite enough to convince us of the extreme misery of the people.

In all of them the story is much the same: "War, disease, the quartering of the troops, forced labour, heavy duties, and the emigration of the Huguenots have ruined this province."

The roads and bridges were in a deplorable condition, and trade reduced to nothing. The frontier provinces were still further overwhelmed by requisitions and by marauding soldiers, who, receiving neither pay nor rations, foraged for their wages. In the district around Rouen, 650,000 out of the 700,000 inhabitants had nothing but straw to sleep on. The peasants in certain provinces had lapsed into a savage state, living frequently on herbs and roots like the beasts, and, being wild as savages, would flee when approached.

The philosopher Locke, who travelled in France in 1676 and 1677, wrote: "The rent of lands in France has fallen one-half in these few years, by reason of the poverty of the people."

Sir William Temple, about the same time says, "The

French peasantry are wholly dispirited by labour and want." In 1708, Addison writes, "We think that France is on her last legs."

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, writing from Paris, in October, 1718, says: "I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery; and all the country villages of France show nothing else. While the post-horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg, with such miserable starved faces, and thin, tattered clothes, they need no other eloquence to convince one of the wretchedness of their condition."

"I have known in France poor people to sell their beds, and lie upon straw," says Somers; "sell their pots, kettles, and all their necessary household goods, to content the unmerciful collector of the king's taxes."

In Burton's diary it is stated (1691) that there were "all the dismal indications of an overwhelming calamity. The fields were uncultivated, the villages unpeopled, the houses dropping to decay."

Dr. Lister, who visited Paris in 1698, says: "Such is the vast multitude of poor wretches in all parts of this city, that whether a person is in a carriage or on foot, in the street, or even in a shop, he is alike unable to transact business, on account of the importunities of the beggars."

It is a tremendous fact that at the end of the reign of Louis XIV. the population of France was less than it had been at his accession seventy-two years before, while from 1715, when he died, to 1785 the population increased thirty-three per cent, and commerce five hundred per cent.

The Duke of St. Simon, as proud an aristocrat as ever lived, wrote his Memoirs day by day, as the reign of

Louis progressed. He was one of the elect. His father had been a favourite page of Louis' father, and had been made a duke because he had, in a flash of inspiration, hit upon a way to get a fresh horse between the royal legs without compelling the royal feet to touch the ground. Louis XIII. was ravenously fond of hunting; a change of horses was frequently necessary; the king did not like the delay and the trouble of dismounting and remounting. The lucky page bethinks him of bringing the fresh horse alongside the jaded one, the head of the one to the tail of the other, so that the royal legs have only to execute a neat whirl from the one saddle to the other — no delay, no trouble, no feet on ground, and on rushes the royal huntsman after the antlered stag.

Genius like that of his page must be rewarded. The hero of a sea-fight might die in obscurity and want; poets, philosophers, and statesmen might pine in dim, squalid neglect; the king's own mother might be shivering, a lonely exile, in the wretched garret in Cologne — but this page, having ministered to the pleasure of his lord, must straightway be lifted into the magic circles of privilege and favour. He is made a duke, and lives long to enjoy health, wealth, and worldly honours.

His son married a lady of noble birth, and, after a brief service in the army, he took up his residence at court. He and his wife occupied grand apartments in the palace. He wrote his Memoirs while acting as a favoured courtier of the king: hence his pen-pictures of passing events are worthy of very high consideration.

Writing of the year 1710, St. Simon says that the distress of the king and the people was extreme. There was no money in circulation. The markets were flooded

with due-bills issued by the king, the banks, and the receivers-general, — paper which the government forced its own creditors to take, but which the law did not compel the people generally to accept as legal tender in the payment of debts. The king also debased the coin, making out of the same amount of metal one-third more money. The government rigorously exacted, in coin, everything that the people owed the king, while the king paid the people with due-bills which were not available for more than half their face value. There was abundance of money for the perfumed dandies and painted wantons who thronged the splendid galleries of Versailles, but there was almost no pay at all for the soldiers who fought the battles of France, or for the public creditors who had legitimate demands against the State.

The capitation tax was doubled, then trebled. New taxes upon merchandise and provisions were imposed. Even baptisms and marriages were taxed. Rioting followed, and the resistance to the law was so general, and the determination to evade it so difficult to control, that the tax was abandoned.

But in 1610 one of the king's secretaries proposed a royal tithe upon the property of each community and of each private person.

Even Louis hesitated to put this enormity in practice.

He knew vaguely that France was not so cheerful and prosperous as were his pensioners of Versailles. Almost under the old monarch's eyes mobs had formed — ragged, hungry, homeless wretches — and had made Versailles resound to the ominous cry of "Bread, bread."

Letters threatening the life of the king had reached and disturbed him. Insulting placards had been posted

in the streets of Paris; ribald songs had been sung, which held up to public scorn the sins of the court and king; and upon two occasions Marshal Boufflers had found great difficulty in preventing an insurrection aimed at the Grand Monarch himself.

Hence, when the new tax of the royal tenth was proposed, Louis hesitated. For several days he appeared melancholy. Suddenly he brightened and became himself again. The explanation he gave was this: Finding himself in doubt about this new burden upon his people, he had unbosomed himself to his confessor, Father Tellier, a Jesuit, who, with consummate art, asked a few days for consideration. He then reported to the king that he had taken the advice of the doctors of divinity of the Sorbonne upon the question, and that they had decided that all the wealth of the king's subjects was his, and that when he took it he only took what was his own.

His scruples having been removed by this decision, the king proceeded to enforce the collection of the royal tenth.

December approached, and the king made it known that he wished a gay season at Versailles. Gay it accordingly was, balls, fêtes, magnificent displays and entertainments of all sorts were had, and around the king shone the plenty, the pride, and the splendour of the Privileged Few.

But in Paris, and in the provinces, the wolves of poverty hunted their prey through all the lower walks of life.

Who can wonder that, when this monstrous embodiment of absolute selfishness and absolute tyranny died, St. Simon should write: —

"The provinces, in despair at their ruin and their annihilation, breathed again and leaped for joy. The people, ruined, overwhelmed, desperate, gave thanks to God, with scandalous noise, for a deliverance their most ardent wishes had not anticipated."

The province of Languedoc, rendered hopeless by such heavy burdens of taxation, offered to surrender *all the wealth of the province* to the king, if he would allow one-tenth of it to be enjoyed by the owner, free from all tax. He not only rejected the proposition, but rebuked those who made it.

With a refinement of tyranny a new tax, for the express benefit of the poor, was levied. In a short time the king appropriated this revenue to his own use, and it remained a regular source of royal income.

It has been generally believed that Louis kept disaffection suppressed completely. He did not do so. On several occasions it required heavy battalions to prevent revolt. In Paris a mob released a woman whom the king's soldiers had put in the pillory, and the situation seemed so critical that our Grand Monarch took no steps to punish the rioters. He even found it judicious to give them work and a mouthful to eat. His son's carriage was surrounded by a throng of the poor as he was leaving the opera, and cries of "Bread, bread," greeted his startled ears. He threw a handful of coin among the people, and, while they scrambled for it, the prince made his escape.

After the king's death it was found that 1,600,000 francs were due to the ambassadors who upheld his glory to the admiring gaze of foreigners; not enough had been paid them of late years to defray the expense

of posting their letters, and in some instances they were suffering for the necessaries of life.

Perhaps no other fact could be adduced which would more vividly illustrate the prostration to which the insatiable egotism of this absolute monarch had reduced a great kingdom.

"The will of God is that he who is born a subject should obey, and make no question."

This amazing proposition was penned by Louis XIV. himself and it expressed his profound convictions.

"Kings," he writes further, "are absolute lords, and have by nature the full and free disposition of the property of all, the property of the Church and the property of the laity."

Upon this theory he acted all his life. He spent the money of the State as though it were a revenue he derived from his private plantation. Colbert, who had spent his laborious life trying to reform the governmental system, implored the king to economize. "Cut down your building expenses to 3,000,000 livres per year," equivalent to $3,000,000 now, "and your other expenses to 60,000,000, and I promise you a full treasury," wrote Colbert to the king. But the words were wasted. In one year Louis spent nearly four times $3,000,000 on his palace of Versailles alone.

When the English drove away James II. he was received royally by Louis; a palace was supplied him, and all the money necessary to a large and splendid court.

So Mr. Peasant of France found himself supporting in idle prodigality two kings, two queens, and two collections of pimps, parasites, eminent vagabonds, and insatiable place-hunters.

No wonder the tax collector had to sell Mr. Peasant's pot. No wonder Mr. Peasant had to eat herbs and roots, beg of travellers, and sleep on straw.

Madame de Montespan gambled away 4,000,000 livres in one night. Every dollar of it was dug out of the ground slowly and painfully by Mr. Peasant. The gilded mistress of a most Christian king gamed away the money in the gorgeous salons of the palace, while Mr. Peasant in the midst of his squalid family went to sleep in his hovel to the music of children crying for something to eat.

Louis gave the Duke of Anjou, his grandson, forty purses of 1000 livres each as pocket-money when he set out for Spain, and he was pleased when another grandson came to him for money to pay his gambling debts. He told his grandson, paternally, that it made no difference how much men of his quality lost — as, in fact, it did not. The people paid.

As to his nobility, the king was most gracious, but most exacting. There must be unlimited obedience, loyalty, and deference to him; that much must be understood always.

There is no evidence that Louis ever pardoned any man who questioned his infallibility. The great engineer Vauban, who had rendered him important and glorious service all his life, ventured in his old age to suggest certain reforms — ventured to hint that there was too much special privilege and too much inequality in taxation. Forthwith he lost favour, his book was publicly burnt by order of the king, and the poor author, considering the king's frown equivalent to the end of the world, died of a broken heart six weeks afterwards.

home in the country is esteemed a dreadful punishment. It humbles the stubbornest offender, and he soon craves pardon, and permission to come back to Versailles.

Racine, having lost favour by an unlucky allusion to the crippled poet Scarron, whose beautiful and artful widow had become the king's wife, feels that life has no more charms, and the noble dramatist goes off into a corner, like a poisoned rat, mopes, and dies.

Even Lauzun, the maddest gallant of the whole lot, the man who had braved the Montespan, broken his sword in presence of the king whom he accused of breaking his word, and who was such an irreverent and insolent brute that he said to the Great Mademoiselle, who had been fool enough to marry him secretly, "Louise of Bourbon, pull off my boots" — Lauzun, even, was so completely broken by his banishment from court that he came back to Louis' feet, fawning, cringing, and, of course, begging for some office.

Under such a system as Louis exemplified, life necessarily became artificial, and the standards of judgment unreliable. Form, deportment, and appearance, always important, became the one test of excellence. Grace in dancing, skill in turning the phrases of flattery, dignity of carriage, proficiency in observing and practising social conventionalities — these were the accomplishments which speeded the courtier upward and onward. A stately walk, an exquisite bow, a smooth tongue, did more for the ambitious man than the winning of battles, or the faithful performance of routine duties.

This being so, it is natural that we should find the noble lords and ladies of the court attaching more importance to matters of etiquette than to any other earthly subject.

Does the Duke of Luxembourg, the greatest soldier of France since Condé and Turenne, presume to walk in front of a lot of titled nobodies at court? Instantly the titled nobodies are up in arms, St. Simon himself hallooing them on, and leading the hunt. They snub the great soldier in the gilded corridors, they do not answer his salute, they offer to accommodate him to a mortal combat, if he so desires; and, above all, they furiously litigate against him in the courts.

Hundreds and hundreds of pages of St. Simon's Memoirs, are devoted to this petty dispute. St. Simon most sincerely believed that cultivated people of all nations, for ages to come, would be absorbedly concerned with this great controversy between the most brilliant soldier of France and a miserable little coterie of court nobodies as to who should walk in front — the Duke of Luxembourg, or the squad of ducal nonentities. It seems that Luxembourg won the lawsuit, — and the ducal nobodies avenged themselves by turning on their heels "in silent contempt" when next the brilliant soldier courteously saluted them at court.

If a noble who had no right to the honour ventured to hold up the cloth of the communion table when Louis communicated, indignant agitation stirred the court to its depths. Before the waters would subside, the presumptuous noble had to be corrected, and the question settled. And as no one but him who enjoyed the undoubted right thereto dared hand the king's hat, or offer him his coat, so only the elect could come close to the royal bed. Once upon a time the president of the Parliament, in a moment of lunacy, ventured to put his profane feet over the "dead line." Angry remonstrances at once

arose from the attendant nobles, and the abashed president had to hasten back on the safe side of the line.

The king himself attached the utmost importance to every detail of court etiquette. He pays each noble lord or lady the exact due of stately politeness, and he exacts full payment from them. To the princes of the blood belongs one degree of respect — the highest. Then come certain of the older nobility, to whom he extends a politeness less marked than that which he pays to princes of the blood. Then there are other gradations in the scale of courtesy, until he gets down to the common herd of the nobility. He omits no mark of respect due to any member of his court. He allows them to omit none due to him. He feels that to maintain one part of the system, he must maintain all. If he relaxes in one place, looseness will follow in others.

When it became necessary to have the renunciation of the Duke of Anjou, then king of Spain, duly made and witnessed, the presence of the notables was necessary. Louis remarked casually that he hoped to see them present on the day in question. This would not do at all. The notables agitate themselves, resent the want of respect about to be shown them, and the king is given to understand that unless his faithful notables are summoned in writing, according to custom, said notables will remain away from the ceremony. Despotic as Louis is, he does not venture to disregard the custom, the formality, the etiquette of the occasion; and the written summonses are duly issued.

Take an illustration on the other side. The scene is at Marly. The king is about to dine, he and "the ladies." No man ever is allowed, under any circum-

stances, to eat with the king, at the king's table. Only in the camp is this rule departed from, and even then most sparingly. On the evening we speak of the ladies are seating themselves at table according to rank. By chance, Madame de Torcy has taken a seat above that of the Duchesse de Duras, who arrives later. Seeing her error, and not wishing to aggravate her guilt by hardening her heart in sin, Madame de Torcy rises from her seat and begs the duchess to take it, while she, the guilty one, "goes foot." The duchess, being a courteous lady, and feeling that she had been partly to blame by the lateness of her arrival, declines to go up higher, and insists that Madame de Torcy remain where she is. With many pretty speeches the ladies thus adjust this little irregularity.

The king now enters, being himself a trifle late this evening. Casting his Olympian glance around, the Grand Monarch notes that Madame de Torcy is not in her proper place. She is actually daring, in the presence of her king, to sit above the Duchess of Duras. His serenity at once leaves him. He glares at the unhappy De Torcy with baleful displeasure. He swells with suppressed wrath. He does not talk, he glooms and glowers at the quaking culprit. He barely tastes his food, which is an alarmingly bad sign, for the Grand Monarch is a mighty eater.

Still enveloped in clouds, Louis rises from the table and proceeds to the rooms of Madame de Maintenon, his mistress or wife, as the case may be. He is hardly seated before he explodes. He has been, he says, a witness of an act of incredible insolence. He says that Madame de Torcy's conduct had thrown him into such a rage that he

had been unable to eat; and that he had ten times been on the point of making her leave the table — she, the insolent bourgeoise! Here he branched off into a history of the De Torcy family, explaining what very common people they were as compared to the dukes. He gave the princesses of the blood strict orders to make known his displeasure to Madame de Torcy, and to tell her that he had found her conduct impertinent. He then left the room. The dreadful news flew all over the palace. Great was the buzzing of the courtiers. The taking of Gibraltar would not have excited them so much.

But the incident was not closed. Louis was still fuming and swelling. Once more the same evening he exploded, and bitterly vented his dissatisfaction with the guilty lady.

Next day the storm raged again, and the king could talk of nothing else but Madame de Torcy's revolutionary conduct, — conduct destructive to the sacred fabric of social ceremony. It never once occurred to the king that the lady's excuse entered into the merit of the question at all. He could not be appeased until the lady had been rebuked, and her husband had written the king a letter of contrite apology.

If the Grand Monarch was so imperious as this concerning an unintentional sin against etiquette, we can imagine how terrible will be the fate of any one who has defied his authority.

One day a party of nobles pursue the stag till the chase leads them far into the country. They lose their way. Presently night comes on, and their distress is considerable. They grope about in the forest, seeking some house where they may shelter themselves for the

night. A light appears at last, and they find comfortable quarters and a courteous welcome from a gentleman whose name they find to be Fargues.

Next morning he pilots them back to their road, and they return to court, loudly praising their host. But the king looks surprised and wrathful. What can be the matter?

It appears that this Fargues had borne arms against the court in the civil wars of the Fronde. Louis remembers the name and the offence. He is filled with anger. How dare this man live in comfort and peace, so near to the king he had once defied? It cannot be borne. Long ago the civil wars were ended and a general amnesty granted; but no matter, the king is bent on revenge.

Lamoignon, the king's prosecutor, is ordered to hunt up some crime for which the old-time rebel may be killed. A crime is found accordingly. Crimes were not difficult to find in the days of the civil wars. A man had been killed and Fargues had been concerned in it — not a strange thing in times of civil war. Fargues is arrested, tried, and condemned. In vain he pleads the amnesty. In vain he pleads that war was raging, and that the man fell in due course of war. Louis wants Fargues' life, and the death penalty is inflicted. It was murder, — a mean and cowardly murder of a weak, friendless man. There was the Prince of Condé, rich, powerful, and secure, who had led the révolt which Fargues had merely followed. And Condé had added to the crime of rebellion against his king that of treason against France; for he had taken service with Spain and had waged war upon his native land. Louis dares not go behind amnesties to punish Condé — the powerful prince of the blood who

has friends, relatives, and supporters throughout the kingdom. He meanly and cruelly wreaks his vengeance upon a commoner, a weakling, whom it was safe to murder.

And yet, with all his pride, the Grand Monarch could stoop to conquer, like the lowest of the bourgeoisie.

In his latter years, as we have seen, cash became wonderfully scarce. The royal treasury was worse than empty. It was mortgaged and discredited.

The aged monarch was in desperate need of ready money. He was obliged to get a supply somewhere.

The Grand Monarch and his financial secretary, Desmarets, lay their heads together, and concoct a scheme to replenish the royal purse.

In Paris there is a rich banker, Bernard by name. He is not a noble, but he has money. He is merely of the despised bourgeoisie, but he has money.

This rich citizen of low birth will be delighted at any attention paid him by the Grand Monarch. If his Majesty will but stoop to bestow some little notice upon Bernard, the banker will doubtless be so overjoyed that he will lend the king some cash. Louis and Desmarets, knowing this, form their plans accordingly.

The Grand Monarch decides to stoop; Desmarets is to bring Bernard out to Marly, and show him around the grounds; Louis is to happen along, in his majestic way, at the right moment, and condescend to see Bernard. Desmarets is then to disappear while Louis himself shows Bernard around and fills the plebeian soul of the rich man with ecstasy unspeakable.

And so it happens. Bernard is invited out to the palace by Desmarets; Louis imposingly struts up and salutes Bernard; Desmarets glides off; Louis takes

charge of the delighted banker, promenades with him over the park, points out to the enraptured commoner the fountains, the basins, the alleys, the groves, and the flower-beds, with that courtly grace which is natural to the Grand Monarch. Bernard thrills with ecstasy; Bernard is enchanted; Bernard quivers with exquisite appreciation of the great king's condescension; and Bernard joyfully hands over to the king's minister all the cash he can rake and scrape, goes into bankruptcy soon afterwards, and pulls down, in his own failure, scores of other commercial and banking houses in a crash which resounds throughout France.

If Louis XIV. ever loved any one but himself, it had seemed to be the young Duchess of Burgundy, his granddaughter by marriage. She was the pet, the privileged character of the court. To amuse the old king she played the girl, the family kitten. She flattered him, coddled him, fondled him. She would fling her arms about his neck, sit upon his knees, play at his feet, and monkey with that steady-going old matron, Madame de Maintenon, until her wintry features were sunlit with a smile.

But this frolicsome young duchess, who was almost the sole ray of light in this dismal marble palace where the aged king and his aged Maintenon sat enshrouded in the gloom which they took to be religion, was not really a girl, but a woman who was married, and had children. She was about to bear another, and for the present she cannot play the family kitten for the amusement of the master of the house. The king, missing his accustomed pleasures from that source, becomes impatient. Deprivation of any sort nettles him.

One day as he is strutting about majestically in the

park, attended by a bevy of courtiers, word is brought that the young duchess has miscarried.

"What is that to me?" cries our Grand Monarch. "Have I not an heir already? How does it matter to me who succeeds me, the one or the other?"

The astonished courtiers remain silent. "Since it had to be so, I thank God that it is over. I shall no longer be interfered with in my pleasures with remonstrances of doctors and matrons. I can once more come and go as I please."

St. Simon says that the courtiers were dumb; but as the Grand Monarch strutted on there were looks exchanged behind his back, and eyebrows lifted.

Yet so completely did this monstrous absolutism impose upon the men of that time, and so thoroughly had Louis conquered France with his everlasting strut, that Racine, the great dramatist, said, in a public address before the French Academy, that the greatest incentive the scholars of France could have diligently to continue their efforts to perfect the French language, should be to make it more and more worthy to celebrate the praises of Louis XIV.

I have dwelt on the system of Louis XIV. because I find within it the embryo of the French Revolution.

It is a mistake to attribute that convulsion to the gay libertine, the Regent Orleans, the feeble voluptuary, Louis XV., or to the stolid, stupid Louis XVI. These men were simply the legatees of a system which was doomed to fall of its own faulty construction. Such a preposterous government as that which Church and State imposed upon the people under Louis XIV. carried its death-warrant with it. It was a system utterly at war with modern tendencies, and, under a weak king, would fall unless all

the privileged united to rivet the fetters upon the unprivileged. Even then, the result of the inevitable struggle would have been doubtful.

Under Louis XIV. the old régime reached high-water mark. I do not find that any material alteration was made in the governmental machine after that. No further privileges of consequence were granted to the nobility. No considerable addition was made to the burdens of the taxpayers. The inequalities between the privileged and the unprivileged were no greater after the death of Louis XIV. than they were before. Politically and socially the relations of the different orders remained the same.

The poverty of the people grew no more distressing than it had been under Louis XIV. Upon the other hand, the middle classes had prospered in business pursuits, while the nobles had spent in court life and its dissipations much of their inherited wealth.

The nation, taken as a whole, was more wealthy and more populous under Louis XV. and Louis XVI., than it had been under Louis XIV.

Why, then, was there no Revolution till 1789? Because under Louis XIV. French loyalty to the king had not been tired out.

From the cradle, children were taught to worship God and the king, and their reverence for the one went hand in hand with their loyalty to the other. They enjoyed the privilege of entering the palace and of being eye-witnesses to the birth of their future master. They also had the high privilege of coming to the palace and seeing royalty eat. Any decently clad citizen could come at his pleasure and see the dauphin sip soup, see the king devour mutton, and the queen mince pie.

Enjoying liberties like these, the people were grateful. They adored the king. And when an heir was born to him they fell into transports of joy. It was so good of Heaven to keep the race of French kings from dying out! Words could not fully express their appreciation of the divine blessing. Bonfires had to blaze in the streets, wine-casks had to be opened, meat and drink had to be handed round, songs had to be sung, and dances of jubilation danced.

With such a reserve fund of inherited stupidity, superstition, and loyalty to draw upon, it is no great wonder that even the preposterous system of Louis XIV. was nearly a century in exhausting its credit.

Much has been said by historians about the baleful influence of bad women in the administrations of the regent and the two kings who followed.

Even Carlyle sees something especially significant and disgraceful in the public appearance of Louis XV. with his mistress at Compiègne.

All this was bad enough, but it was part of the system of Louis XIV.

He it was who first honoured his mistresses by formal and public recognition. Under his administration the royal concubine became a functionary of the State. The Montespan bore her seven bastards in the palace, publicly, as became a queen.

At that very camp of Compiègne where Louis XV. paid public court to the Du Barry, his grandfather Louis XIV. had stood "with doffed hat" before Madame de Maintenon, doing her honour in presence of his whole army and the distinguished foreigners there assembled.

When he went to the wars in Flanders did not Louis XIV. carry "the ladies" along? And as to himself, were there not three of said ladies set apart? First, there was the Montespan, the rising star of the harem; second, there was the Vallière, who was on the wane; third and last, there was his lawful wife — the pious, patient, devoted Maria Theresa, who was ever ready to radiate her lonely heart with the fulness of joy if Louis would only deign now and then to smile in her eyes. Think of it — two mistresses and a wife carried along with him to the army, and all in the same carriage!

And yet even the historians who condemn Louis as a ruler, claim, with one accord, that he was a gentleman.

Under Louis we see more money lavished upon women than under the kings who succeeded.

We find petticoat rule and Jesuit influence making a slave of a king who fancies he is an autocrat, just as we see it later. The generals who lead the armies of France find it wise to pay court to his concubines and his valets. The eunuchs of the harem, in an Eastern despotism, were not more assiduously cultivated by those who wished favours at court than were the valets of the king and the serving women of the concubines.

We see him squander millions upon buildings erected for his own gratification where his successors did not spend thousands. We see him allow his favourites to plunder the treasury, quite as freely as was done subsequently.

Morals were not at lower ebb under Louis XV. than under Louis XIV. Immorality ceased to pretend to hide itself, that was all. When Louis XIV. legitimized his bastards, compelled their recognition as princes of the

blood, and formally forced them into the line of succession, he made a more brutal attack upon public morals than Louis XV. ever dared to make. To enrich one of these bastards Louis XIV., the gentleman, compelled his own cousin, the Grand Mademoiselle, to convey to the Duke of Maine a large portion of her magnificent property, as the price of Louis' release from captivity of the crazy Lauzun, whom she madly loved and had privately married.

Under Louis XIV. we will find all the odious taxes which were the grievances of 1789; the forced labour and the serfdom.

We will find that it was a regular part of the king's system to violate the liberty of the citizen, by opening his letters as they passed through the mails. In this way Louis XIV., the gentleman, kept himself informed of the secret opinions, expressions, and conduct of his subjects. This opening of private letters was thought to be very low and vulgar, when practised a century later by "the Corsican upstart," Napoleon Bonaparte.

Arbitrary arrests, imprisonments, and punishments were as common and as flagrant under Louis XIV. as they ever became.

In the prisons, after Louis' death, were found political prisoners and religious prisoners in great numbers. The regent released them, to the great joy of the people.

In the Bastille was found among others one prisoner who had been confined there thirty-five years. He had not been tried. He had not been told the cause of his arrest. He had come to Paris from Italy on a visit, thirty-five years before, and had been arrested as he stepped out of his carriage. Into the Bastille he had

been put, and there he had lain from then until now. Nobody could tell why the man had been imprisoned. The prosecutor could never be found. The records showed nothing, except that the Bastille had swallowed its victim — thirty-five years before!

And there he had lain all these dreadful, dreary years, eating his heart out with rage and despair, with grief and with the gnawing wish to know something of life outside, something of home and friends, of wife and child, far away among the sunny slopes of his Italian fatherland. What bitter tears must have wetted the cold rocks of that lonely cell, during the awful days and nights of those thirty-five years!

Louis XIV., gorgeously arrayed, filling his royal nostrils with the sweet savour of courtly incense whichever way he turns, parades up and down the walks of Versailles, hums between his teeth the songs in which his own praises are sung, basks in the light of the sun and the smirks of his parasites, and nowhere in the machinery of his government is there a cog which carries acquittal or conviction to the prisoner stiffening with age in his cell, and who has groaned in prison while one whole generation of men has been born, has gone forth buoyantly to the fields of labour, to the ranks of the army, to the ships of the sea — and has been cut down as grass by the sickle of the years, and has given place to the hurrying feet of another!

Louis XIV. dies in 1715, and the prisoner of thirty-five years wakes up one morning, and finds himself free.

They unlock his door, lead him forth, and tell him to go home.

Home? What would he find there now? Long, long

ago he must have been given up as dead. His wife cannot yet be living and waiting. If she lives, some other man is her husband. His children will now be in middle age, if alive. Who can tell if they yet be in Italy? And, after all these years, who knows whether his return to native land might not carry more grief than joy?

"Alas! where can I go?" asks the poor prisoner. "I cannot now earn my living; home, I have none; friends, I have none. You have kept me here in prison thirty-five years, the best part of my life; let me stay here in my cell till I die."

And they did so, giving him all the liberties he would enjoy, and all the comforts he craved.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE REGENCY

John Law and his Schemes

LOUIS XIV. was succeeded by his grandson, Louis XV., who was but five years of age. His parents were dead, and the regency was obtained by the young king's next of kin, Louis, Duke of Orleans.

The will of Louis XIV. had sought to deprive Orleans of the full power of the regency, and to throw most of it into the hands of the Duke of Maine, but the Parliament and the nobility, to whom Orleans adroitly appealed, showed the utmost readiness in disregarding the directions of the deceased monarch, to whose slightest nod they had bent so long.

The Regent Orleans was one of the richest of men, and one of the most dissolute. Good-natured, intelligent, brave, and ambitious, he was the slave of the most abandoned appetites, and a weakling in the hands of designing men.

His policy was, in the main, dictated by Cardinal Dubois, a crafty priest, who, after having been his teacher in youth, became the ruling spirit of his administration.

A.D. 1715 Orleans began his regency by opening the prisons and releasing political prisoners. He also made a raid on the farmers of the taxes with the intention of compelling

them to disgorge. They had looted the public funds to the extent of many hundreds of millions, and several of them committed suicide to avoid the shame and the punishment which threatened them. Most of them, however, resorted to the judicious bribery of influential people, and in a short time the prosecutions were discontinued. Only $15,000,000 in cash reached the treasury as the net result of the raid.

Orleans, in accordance with the agreement he had made with the nobles previous to their support of him for the regency, appointed six councils to manage the affairs of the various departments of State.

These councils were composed of nobles, with the sole exception of Dubois. It was found, however, after fair trial, that these nobles were utterly incapable of discharging the duties of their places, and the councils were dissolved.

That to which Dubois had been appointed never was even able to organize itself. The other members disputed with him as to the place where he should sit, and he, being a most litigious person, insisted upon his rights. The council went to pieces upon that ceremonial rock.

Commenting upon the incapacity shown by the nobles in these councils, the Duke of Antin writes in his Memoirs some interesting comments. He says that Louis XIV. had never employed the nobles when real work was to be done, because they were unfit for it, and that now the regent had tried them, and found them still wanting. Antin thought that they were "unfitted for business and good for nothing but to get killed in war." He further expresses his uneasiness lest their incapacity

should become generally known, thus bringing loss of influence to the entire aristocracy.

The greatest difficulty which confronted the regent was the empty treasury — the deficit. The outgo was chronically and increasingly greater than the income.

The Duke of Noailles, the chief of the council of finance, wrote to Madame de Maintenon : —

"We have found matters in a more terrible state than can be described ; both the king and his subjects are ruined ; nothing paid for several years ; confidence is entirely gone. Hardly ever has the monarchy been in such a condition, though it has several times been near its ruin. The picture is not agreeable, but it is only too true."

In these dismal sentences the old courtier of the Grand Monarch has written a terrific epitaph of that destructive reign.

The regent resorted to various expedients to obtain relief. Not reaping much of a harvest by levying tribute upon the tax gatherers, he tried a mild type of repudiation. He arbitrarily scaled certain classes of the public debt, abolished many offices which Louis XIV. had created and sold, and cut off some pensions and annuities. He also recoined the specie, putting less gold and silver into the coins than they had contained before, — a method by which he hoped to get enough money out of 100 francs to pay a debt of 125. The device gave the honest regent some relief, but not enough.

While the government was floundering helplessly amid the difficulties which the Grand Monarch had so majestically bequeathed to his successors, a new figure appeared upon the scene and proposed to introduce an era of prosperity.

John Law was born in Edinburgh of respectable parents, his father being a goldsmith and banker. The son was well educated, and inherited a good estate.

He went up to London at an early age, entered fashionable society, and sowed a heavy crop of wild oats. He kept this up for several years, wasting his substance in riotous living, until he killed a fellow-citizen in a duel, and had to leave England. He then went to the Continent, where he devoted a great deal of time to the study of the bank of Amsterdam and other banks — including faro banks. He was an expert mathematician, and an enthusiast on financial subjects, believing, as many other well-meaning enthusiasts have done, that he had penetrated the mystery of the money question. His theory was that the circulation should be increased, and that the true basis of money was the credit of the nation.

He formulated his plan of a bank, and bored people by talking about it, becoming almost as great a nuisance as Columbus did when he went wandering about Europe, begging kings to lend him money with which to find a new world. The inventors of new things are terribly tiresome creatures. Had Napoleon been able to listen more patiently to Robert Fulton, he might have realized that the idea of the steamboat, properly applied, would have swept the wooden sailing-ships of England off the seas, and sent the British Empire to rack and ruin.

But these pioneers of new ideas are fearfully persistent, and John Law finally secured the countenance of the Regent Orleans. It has suited the purpose of those who have a deadly hatred of paper-money theories, to represent John Law as a very bad man, and they lay

special stress upon the fact that he was a professional gambler. Every man must be judged by the times in which he lives, and in those days everybody gambled. The kings gambled, the queens gambled, the nobles gambled, the priests gambled, the commons gambled. There are well-authenticated instances in which the mourners played cards on the coffin of the deceased on the way to the cemetery.

Louis XIV., who was reigning when Law first appeared at the court of France, not only gambled himself, but insisted upon it among his courtiers, and encouraged his children and grandchildren to bet heavily.

Gaming tables were kept ready in the palace, and the king loved to pass among the lords and ladies and exchange courteous nothings with them while the games were going on. Several times he appropriated huge sums of public money to defray the gambling debts of his family and his favourites. The same fashion of universal gaming continued under the regency of Orleans, and also during the long reign of Louis XV.

When John Law was in London, Charles II., and all the court, and all the fashionable world gambled. When he went to other countries, he found the same fever raging there, and he followed the fashion. In associating with kings, queens, princes, dukes, he lost the simple ways of his Scotch ancestors, and became a man of the world. He could not hope to surpass the immoralities of the French court, but he kept them in sight. Good manners required it. He could not bet as heavily as King Louis or the princes of the blood, because he had no tax money of the people out of which to recoup his losses. He could not drink as much and be drunk as often as the Duke of Orleans, be-

cause he was a foreigner and had a character to sustain. He could not keep as many fine horses as the Duke of Bourbon, because he was not the heir of a family which had been looting the national treasury of France for 200 years. He could not afford a seraglio of as many fine women as the Duke of Richelieu, because he had to pass at least part of the day in attending to business.

But while Law was not so bad as any of these high-born rascals, we admit that he followed humbly at a distance, and became as loose in his morals as royal etiquette demanded. It should be remembered to his credit that he was absolutely sincere in his financial views and staked his all upon them. When he finally left France, fleeing for his life, he carried nothing with him, and the government coolly appropriated his private fortune to its own virtuous uses.

What was the famous "System" of John Law?

In a nutshell it was this: to increase the money supply of the nation so that circulation would be quickened, business encouraged, enterprise stimulated, labour employed, products multiplied, prices raised, and debts more easily paid.

This shrewd Scotchman saw that the world was chained down by silver and gold. He saw that commerce tried in vain to spread her wings for a bolder flight. He realized that the world's stock of the precious metal was too small to supply the needs of mankind for money. Therefore he proposed that in addition to the metallic money coined, the State should issue a paper currency based upon the public credit.

When this suggestion was first made, it was laughed out of court. Even now there are well-meaning people

the world over who have a superstitious reverence for the old orthodox doctrines about money. John Law, having a pair of eyes, dared to use them; having a mind, ventured to think for himself.

His original plan was to use land as the basis of his paper money, issuing to the owner, on pledge of his property, notes to the amount of two-thirds of its value.

In France his proposals to come to the relief of the government with paper money were rejected, but he was allowed to establish a bank, the first ever known in France.

A.D. 1716 Chartered in May, 1716, with a capital of 6,000,000 livres, its notes being redeemable in coin of a fixed weight and fineness, it prospered steadily, and soon had 51,000,000 livres of its notes in circulation. The effect attracted the attention of all. Perkins, in his history of "France under the Regency," says, "Merchants undertook new enterprises; manufacturers increased their products; the market for grain improved; the rate of interest fell."

Thus the benefits which invariably attend a liberal supply of currency were enjoyed by the country at large.

In December, 1718, the bank became a state institution — a national bank. Law was no longer its sole manager; a royal council controlled. The king was to be liable for its bills, and the government was to regulate the amount issued.

A.D. 1718 This was bad for Law and his system: first, because the royal credit was low; and second, because no one could predict how far the needy and profligate government might go in issuing bills. Nowhere does it appear that these bills were to be made a legal tender. They were merely the king's due-bills — his promises to pay;

hence, they were not in themselves money. They were redeemable in gold and silver, and circulated not upon their legal-tender quality, but upon their claim to be redeemed in metallic money.

Of course the moment the government issued more of these notes than it could meet with coin on demand, the whole fabric would topple. Such notes did not free the people from the coin bondage at all; on the contrary, the despotic mastery of values, in the long run, was left just where it had been all the while, — in coin, the money of the redemption.

In consenting to this arrangement, Law was not true to his own financial principles.

Having made a splendid success of his bank, he launched into other enterprises. He dreamed of doing for France, on an enlarged scale, what the East India Company was doing for England; also of developing the colonial empire of France, and of giving her a controlling share in the ocean-going trade of the world. Few grander plans have ever been formed.

First, there was the Louisiana domain, which, up to that time, had yielded the mother country no revenues, because its boundless resources were unknown and undeveloped. Law was the first who realized the value of this property. He profoundly believed that France could call into existence a new empire beyond the seas, and that along the Mississippi new marts of trade would pour forth their wealth in tribute to the mother country. For nearly two centuries it has been the fashion to laugh at these day-dreams of John Law; and yet we, in our day, can see that he was right and his critics wrong. The Louisiana property included all the territory out of which the States of

Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota have been formed, to say nothing of the Indian Territory and the Dakotas.

Not in his wildest dreams did Law exaggerate the value of the imperial domain upon which his company was based, and against which it issued stock.

The government ceded to Law's company the absolute title to this property, — a grant which carried New Orleans at the one end and what is now Chicago at the other, and which for 3000 miles embraced the finest lands, timber, minerals, and natural wealth of every sort that the earth affords. Nowhere in all the world can be found as much territory in one body so intrinsically and permanently valuable as that upon which Law founded his famous Mississippi Company.

Nearly a century after he had failed and fled, another wise man realized the value of Louisiana, and made haste to seize a sudden opportunity to secure it for the United States, but even then Jefferson was severely censured by the fossilized growlers of his day, for buying worthless property.

To develop the Louisiana country and fit out vessels for its trade, Law issued 1,000,000,000 livres in stock, in shares of 500 livres each, equal in our money to $200,000,000 in shares of $100. In his eagerness to please those in authority, he unfortunately agreed to receive in payment for his stock the outstanding notes of the government, which were at a discount of more than sixty per cent. Going a step further he proposed to the government that as it was in no condition to redeem its notes, he would fund them at four per cent.

Thus, instead of getting cash for his stock, he got a four per cent obligation of a discredited and bankrupt administration; and instead of having money on hand for the building of ships, warehouses, forts, and for the purchase of stores and supplies for his colonies, his company was burdened with the accumulated liabilities of a broken-down monarchy.

Why did so shrewd a man as Law do so reckless a thing? It is not possible to say. He was a new man, a foreigner, and an adventurer; to win the favour of the ruling classes was absolutely necessary; it may be that his precarious circumstances, his doubtful standing, compelled him to take the government into partnership with him, and create an identity of interest between himself and the State.

The stock issued was subscribed slowly; for nearly two years it was quoted below par, and to strengthen his company Law purchased from the government in 1718 the monopoly of the manufacture of tobacco for the period of nine years.

By royal edict, the property and commercial privileges of the French East India Company, a decrepit concern which owned magnificent franchises and did not know what to do with them, were transferred to Law's company on condition that all outstanding debts of the East India Company should be paid.

Thus the new company, in addition to its empire in the West, acquired a monopoly of Eastern commerce. Asia, Africa, and the islands of the South Seas, as well as America, were to be tributaries to its wealth. No wonder that Law was dazzled by the prospect. Great Britain has since reaped where he sowed, practised what he preached, A.D. 1719

materialized where still he dreamed, and yet his vast scheme is usually spoken of as The South Sea Bubble. The impartial historian, not fearing to honour the pioneers who fail, is forced to say that France lost the colonial and commercial leadership of the world by not following up the plans of the despised Scotchman, John Law.

In July, 1719, the government sold to his company, at a high price, the privilege of coinage for nine years, and also, in August of the same year, cancelled its contract with the farmers-general of the taxes, and sold the privilege of collecting the principal taxes to Law for 52,000,000 livres.

As a climax to his daring ventures, Law now proposed to have his company assume the entire floating debt of the bankrupt monarchy, offering to advance 1,500,000,000 livres, at three per cent, by which loan the king would have but one creditor. The government eagerly accepted the offer.

Let us look into the status of this wonderful company.

First, it was the sole creator of the currency of the kingdom; second, it was sole manager of the foreign trade; third, it owned the tobacco monopoly and the privilege of coinage; fourth, it owned a vast colonial empire and maintained a fleet on the seas; fifth, it owned the entire national debt; sixth, it was the sole collector of the principal taxes of the kingdom; seventh, it was the embodied public credit of the French nation.

To get the money to pay off the national debt, Law issued bills to the amount of 1,500,000,000 livres.

So far all was going well. The shares were advancing, the bank-notes were preferred to specie, colonists were being settled in Louisiana, twenty-one ships of the company were afloat, produce from the colony was coming in,

and the promise of a steady and profitable development of the business was good.

Had not a wild craze for speculation suddenly broken out and carried all before it, John Law's company would probably have added as much to the grandeur and riches of France as the East India Company brought to Great Britain.

Law himself set the example of gambling in his stocks.

In the spring of 1719 the shares were quoted at 300 livres, the par value being 500. To stimulate purchasers, he made a contract to take 200 shares at par in six months from date, and deposited 40,000 livres to secure his promise.

The effect was electrical. Prices at once boomed. In May, 1719, the stock was quoted at par; by July it had jumped to 1000; in September to 5000; in November to 10,000. From these prodigious figures they still rose, until a share of the par value of 500 sold for 12,000, 15,000, and even 20,000!

One reason why such a tremendous business was done in these stocks was that they were purchasable on instalments. By paying the premium and five per cent, any one could subscribe. Thus the market was broadened immensely.

At that time there was no stock exchange in France or elsewhere. Dealings in futures and on margins were unknown, and stock-jobbing was an undiscovered art. Instead of the scene which to-day can be witnessed on the floor of the stock exchange of a thousand cities, curious observers saw miscellaneous mobs gather in the open street in front of Law's bank in the Rue Quincampoix, and fight all day long the furious battle of the stocks.

The fever of speculation raged over Paris and throughout France. The hunger for sudden wealth gnawed at the stomach of the bootblack and the duke, the milliner and the marchioness, the layman and the priest, the commoner and the prince of the blood. Furious crowds pushed and scrambled in the mad race. The aristocrat met the peasant and the burgher on a footing of literal equality in the street, all distinctions of rank levelled by the greed for gain, and that money has no master was seen as the French people had not seen it before.

Fabulous stories were told of fortunes suddenly made. The widow Chaumont came up to Paris to collect a certain claim, the loss of which would ruin her. She was offered payment in government paper, then worth less than half its face value. In despair, she took it, and when Law proposed to receive this paper in payment for his shares, she invested it all in his company. Three years later she was worth 100,000,000 francs. The Duke of Bourbon made millions; so did the Duke of Antin and the Prince of Conti. A valet was said to have made fifty millions, a bootblack forty, and a restaurant waiter thirty. The word millionnaire first came into use during these days of sudden fortunes.

A cobbler of the street made a fortune by keeping writing materials in his shop for the convenience of those who wished to sign transfers; a hunchback allowed himself to be used as a writing-desk, and became rich from the presents made him by those who wrote stock bargains on his hump; a soldier with a very broad back earned a handsome competence in the same way, retired on it, and lived happily ever after.

While this river of plenty was flowing, Law was the

most conspicuous and admired figure in Europe. All France was at his feet.

The regent received him as one of the royal circle; dukes thronged his rooms; a duchess kissed his hand in public; the city of Edinburgh sent him a gold box, and voted the freedom of the city to "the Honourable John Law." The Chevalier de St. George, head of the royal house of Stuart, honoured him by asking for a gift of money, and Law, who spent his money like a prince in a fairy tale, granted the request.

On January 5, 1720, he was appointed comptroller-general of the kingdom — having changed his religion to qualify himself for the place. A.D. 1720

In July, 1719, the directors of the company had declared that a dividend of twelve per cent should be paid on the stock. This was suicidal. The revenues of the company did not warrant any such dividend.

In December the stock consisted of 624,000 shares. At the subscription price, this represented 312,000,000 livres, equal to $62,400,000. Considering the colossal assets of the company, this amount of stock was not large. Few railroad companies of to-day carry a lighter burden than that. There was nothing chimerical in hoping that dividends could be paid upon such a sum, but arbitrarily to fix a dividend of twelve per cent, without regard to the earning capacity at that time, was manifestly ruinous.

The only profits already enjoyed by the company were some millions made out of farming the taxes, and the three per cent interest on the loan to the king.

Had a dividend to this extent been declared, all would have been well. The shares would have shrunken to their true value, the wild fever of speculation would

have subsided, and the company's progress would have been one of gradual, legitimate growth. But when the directors voted the false dividend, the wreck of the company was only a question of time.

A.D. 1719 Not satisfied with the twelve per cent dividend which they had voted at the July meeting, the directors, in December, 1719, voted that the annual dividend on the stock should be forty per cent.

For this act of insanity Law himself was to blame. He seems to have lost his head, intoxicated by his success. The inflation of the currency and the sudden access of apparent wealth had caused prices to rise fabulously. The value of land, of the necessaries of life, of wages, and of all other commodities, had more than doubled, and the wildest extravagance marked the expenditures of those who had grown so unexpectedly rich. Easy come, easy go, was the fashion. A lucky landscape painter bought the diamonds which the king of Portugal had ordered, the monarch being short of cash and the painter being suddenly burdened with money. A speculator, having just won 50,000 livres, gave 200 for a pullet for his dinner. At the château of the widow Chaumont,—she who had been so poor a little while before,—it required, every day, an ox, two calves, six sheep, and fowls without number, to feast her friends and servants. The lucky painter who had bought the diamonds intended for a king, lived in a château of his own, kept eighty horses in his stables, had ninety servants to wait upon him, and allowed only gold and silver plate to be seen upon his table. While this wild revel was at its height, there were long-headed investors in Law's stocks who began to sell out and to reinvest their money in lands, houses, plate, and precious stones.

The natural consequence was that the prices of the shares began to fall. A.D. 1720

Still, the decline was very gradual, and Law should have let it alone. Instead of that, however, he began to resort to violent legislation to check the depreciation, and thus hastened the retreat into a rout. By royal edict he deprived people of the right to invest in gold or silver plate, diamonds or other jewels, while payments in specie were limited by law to sums of 100 francs.

Citizens were forbidden to hoard silver and gold, and were commanded to put it in circulation. The police were required to search suspected houses for hidden specie.

Heavy penalties were prescribed for those who should keep more than 500 livres of gold and silver on hand, and rewards were offered to informers in order to induce servants to betray their masters and members of a family to report on each other.

This insane law was actually put in force. The officers of the law, led by informers, entered houses, tore up floors, broke into walls, ransacked garrets, and dug up gardens, in search of hidden treasure. In many instances they found it, as treacherous relatives or servants usually knew where the money was concealed.

What made this law the more odious was its partiality to the privileged classes. The Prince of Conti had carried three cart-loads of specie from the bank, and was largely responsible for the run on it, but the officers made no earnest effort to search his palace, and he kept his gold. The Duke of Bourbon insolently refused to return his, and defied the regent to find it. It was not found.

To make matters still worse, Law now secured a royal

edict demonetizing both gold and silver, and making paper the sole legal tender. Where the government is bankrupt, has no credit, changes its laws every month, and repudiates debts at its pleasure, even a legal-tender act will not save paper money from a panic which is already in full career.

Not yet content, the company indulged in one more destructive expedient, — it went to buying its own stock for the purpose of supporting the market.

In addition to this, the price of the shares was fixed by law at 9000 livres. The bank agreed to sell or buy at that price — the bank having now been consolidated with the company.

As the market was still falling, holders of the stock rushed to the bank to sell, at 9000 livres, the shares for which they had paid the bank from 500 to 5000 livres.

To pay for these shares, the bank was obliged to issue more notes. The printing-press was kept busy. Such an inflation of the currency was never before known. Prices rose as the volume of paper money increased. Confidence was gone.

A.D. 1720 Then came the famous edict of May 21, 1720. It was enacted that there should be a gradual contraction of the paper currency, and a corresponding decrease in the fixed price of the shares. For instance, a bank-bill which represented 100 livres on May 21, should be worth only eighty on the 22d, and should suffer successive reductions, until on the 1st of December it would represent but fifty livres.

Now, as the price of the shares was to be correspondingly and simultaneously reduced as the value of the notes diminished, this royal mandate really injured no one. It was a clumsy way to contract a currency which

sorely needed contracting. Paper money is a good thing, as rain is; but it is possible to have too much paper money, just as it is possible to get a calamitous overplus of rain.

To the public, the edict of May 21 meant repudiation. The citizen who had a note of 100 francs understood that in six months from that day he would have a note for only fifty. That was all he understood about it, and the proposition was, to him, extremely distasteful. He saw half his money gone at one stroke of the royal pen. He made a great outcry, — so great that the edict was rescinded six days after it had been published, but its fatal work was done. Law and all his schemes were doomed. In vain he secured the repeal of the various edicts which had hastened his ruin. It was too late.

The run on the bank had become a crush, a murderous struggle for precedence. Lives were lost in the mob, and then riots broke out. Furious crowds beset the palace of the king, exposing, as a reproach to the wicked rulers of a wretched people, the body of one of the fifteen women who had been crushed to death in the street while waiting to get her bank-note redeemed. Law himself had to remain in hiding, for the mob would have torn him in pieces — the same mob which formerly had fawned at his feet.

A revolution was narrowly avoided. Soft words and soothing measures turned away the danger; besides, the mob had no leader, and the troops were as yet blindly loyal to the king. Specie payments were suspended, and a death-blow given to Law's system, by the edict of October 10, 1720, which enacted that after November 1 the notes of the bank should no longer be used as currency;

contracts were to be discharged and payments made in gold and silver.

A.D. 1720 In November the stock of the company reached its lowest figure. Shares sold for 2000, in paper worth ten cents in the dollar. A gold louis, equivalent to about nine dollars now, bought a share which had sold for $4000 a year before.

Those who bought at this time realized a handsome profit, for the commercial company continued business till 1769, enjoying at times a degree of prosperity which caused the shares to advance to 3000 livres. It died when Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour allowed the colonial empire of France to melt away.

The bank passed out of existence, to be succeeded nearly a century later by the present Bank of France. Law fled before the storm, and settled in Venice, where he died, poor and broken-hearted, in 1729. The government had confiscated his property, and the dukes and princes who had destroyed his career by forcing issue after issue of paper money and by hauling cart-loads of gold away from his bank, left him to die in neglect and poverty.

The huge task of winding up the affairs of his enterprise now remained. The bank and the Company of the Indies were government concerns, and the government had to take charge of the wreck, which it did with characteristic injustice and dishonesty.

A board of revision was appointed, and holders of the shares and notes were required to deposit them with this board, as well as a statement of the manner in which they had been obtained. Five hundred and eleven thousand persons deposited notes and contracts to the amount of 2,200,000,000 livres, and 125,000 shares in the Com-

pany of the Indies. All those which were not deposited were declared null and void.

The board of revision then went to work to reduce the king's liabilities, and by an arbitrary and tyrannical repudiation of part of the debt they scaled it down to $1,700,000,000.

This sum was funded in notes bearing two and one-half per cent interest, and in annuities at four per cent.

Thus, after all was said and done, the national debt, and the interest thereon, was less than it had been before Law assumed the burden.

The government then levied fines upon the millionaires, punishing them apparently for no reason except that they had been lucky. The widow Chaumont, for instance, was compelled to pay a fine of 8,000,000 livres. Others paid in proportion to their gains, and altogether these penalties amounted to 187,000,000 livres. It was robbery under forms of law.

Again the privileged classes were exempted. No greedier speculators had appeared in the famous Rue Quincampoix than the princes, dukes, and marquises of the old régime. The regent himself had made his millions out of Law's shares. But on the list of those who were fined for having speculated successfully the name of no person of rank appears.

As to the Company of the Indies, the 125,000 shares were reduced to 56,000. The privileges of coinage and of farming the taxes were taken away from it. The monopoly of the tobacco trade was not disturbed, and it was allowed to keep its trading privileges. Curtailed to these modest dimensions, the company lived and prospered until 1769, as already stated.

The more the system of Law is studied, the less extravagant it will appear. His bank was organized upon precisely the same principles which bring prosperity to the banks of our own time. Its notes were payable in coin, the issue was strictly limited, and its management was conservative and sagacious. It was only when the government took charge of it, and the rapacity of the spendthrift nobles had to be gratified, that every prudential barrier to the issue of notes was broken down.

The notes which overflowed the channels of trade, exceeding all demands of business, were issued in violation of Law's instructions, in defiance of his protests. He was powerless. The government had control of the bank, and a lot of reckless profligates had control of the government. The regency was another reign of Sardanapalus. Aladdin's lamp could not have furnished enough gold for such a crew. It was a mad revel of dissolute men and abandoned women, the like of which had not been seen since the days of Nero and Heliogabalus.

It may be said that where the government exercises the power of creating money, it will always create too much. This is equivalent to saying that governments are not fit to govern. If the government is to be intrusted with the power to decide how many soldiers shall compose the army, how many vessels shall constitute the navy, how many harbours, forts, custom-houses, post-offices, signal-stations, lighthouses, and dockyards there shall be, why can it not be intrusted with the power of deciding how much money there shall be?

As a matter of fact, John Law's theory of credit money has been the salvation of the very nations which revile his name.

Paper money carried England successfully through the fiery furnace of the Napoleonic struggle; paper money carried these United States triumphantly through the great Civil War; and paper money lifted the industries of France out of the dust into which the iron legions of Germany had trampled them in the year 1870.

It is not too much to say that Law was one of the fathers of modern commerce.

He emancipated business from the rigid trammels of cash, and called into life public credit. He put an end to the system under which merchants went about from market to market with bags of specie, limiting their dealings to that narrow basis. He pushed outwards the frontiers of enterprise, enlarged the boundaries of endeavour, quickened the spirit of commercial adventure, and opened new routes to fortune.

In the issuing of shares against the Louisiana property, we see the embryo of the modern system of railroad, mining, and canal stocks, and their numerous progeny.

In his purchase of shares for future delivery, we see the germ of the modern system of dealing on margins. In the promiscuous crowd which gathered in front of his bank to gamble in his shares, we see the beginning of the modern stock exchange. In his vast reach of commercial purpose and his splendid dreams of unbounded wealth, we see the forerunner of that wonderful spirit of modern enterprise which has made the merchant prince a reality, and has given to syndicates of private persons wealth such as no Crœsus ever possessed, and revenues surpassing those of emperors or kings.

What Napoleon did in the civil and military service of France, Law did in the business world. The way was

opened to him who could walk therein. The halo of caste was gone. The widow Chaumont could win more money in stock gambling than the Duke of Bourbon; the lucky painter could outbid a luckless king and live in a luxury the king might envy. Servants grew richer than their masters; the commons were quicker at good bargains than the aristocrats. In the hurly-burly of speculation, in the hand-to-hand fight for sudden riches, the bourgeois had met the noble and had worsted him.

Hence Law, without knowing it perhaps, had done a notable work in France. He had pretty effectually redistributed the floating wealth. Thousands were beggared who long had been rich, while thousands were enriched who long had been beggars.

He also made war upon the internal tariffs of France, and had them removed. He cheapened the necessaries of life in Paris by abolishing certain unjust taxes which hampered trade and increased prices; and he advocated good roads, which at that time were grievously needed. His plans were carried out later in the reign.

Law's great offence was that he was in advance of his age. He paid the usual penalty.

CHAPTER XXXVII

LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH

THE foreign policy of the regency was directed by Cardinal Dubois. It is said that he owed his appointment to English influence, and that he was in the pay of that power. His policy was certainly all that England could have asked. By the Triple Alliance between France, England, and Holland, the regent agreed to expel the Stuart Pretender, to destroy the naval works at Mardyck, fill up the port of Dunkirk, to withdraw from the commerce of the South Seas, and to form a defensive alliance between England and France. A.D. 1717

The Triple Alliance was aimed chiefly at Spain, upon whose throne tremulously sat Philip V., for whose elevation Louis XIV. had so lavishly poured out the blood and the treasure of France.

Philip was governed by his wife, and his wife was governed by a priest. Cardinal Alberoni was at this time the virtual ruler of Spain. Possessed of considerable ability, he made the mistake of believing that he was another Richelieu. He undertook to revive Spain commercially, agriculturally, and politically. He formed vast plans of foreign aggrandizement. He plotted to hurl the regent from his high place in France, and schemed to restore the Stuarts to the throne of England.

In France his hopes were set upon the Duke of Maine;

while against England he proposed to send a Stuart expedition commanded by Charles XII. of Sweden.

These fine plans miscarried. Dubois soon knew all about the plot with the Duke of Maine, and at the proper time easily crushed it.

A.D. 1718 and 1719 Without waiting to declare war, England attacked the Spanish fleet on the coast of Sicily, and defeated it. Another Spanish fleet, which was intended to carry the Stuart Pretender to Scotland, was destroyed by a tempest. The English took Vigo, and the French army, under the Duke of Berwick, invaded Spain.

Alberoni collapsed, fled to Rome, and Spain came to terms.

In this war Austria had acted with the Triple Alliance. As a result, she strengthened her control over Italy, while England established her empire over the ocean. France had spent millions, and won nothing, not even "glory."

In May, 1717, Peter the Great, czar of Russia, visited Paris to solicit a treaty with France. A few years before this he had wished to visit France, but Louis XIV. had declined to receive him. Russia then was not a member of the European family of nations. She was regarded as barbarous, and her people as little better than savages.

The regent, while refusing the Russian alliance which the czar offered, gave him a royal reception, and lodged him in the palace of Versailles.

Peter the Great was a magnificent savage, an enlarged and somewhat modernized edition of Alaric, and he created an immense sensation in effeminate Parisian circles.

His fondness for soap and water was undeveloped, his ideas of etiquette aboriginal. He rode about the streets

in a common cab, examined everything that excited his curiosity, and talked with every one who could teach him anything useful. Having spent the day in this laborious routine, he and his royal followers would gather up a lot of scarlet women, carry them to Versailles, and spend the night in boisterous revelry, profaning the sanctuaries which had been dedicated to the Pompadours and Maintenons — to the intense scandal of the high-born and licentious ladies who ministered to the regent and his friends.

Although Peter was a glutton, a drunkard, and a libertine, he was a tremendous worker, bending all the strength of a powerful creative genius to the herculean task of making a mighty nation out of the unwieldy Russian hordes. What he saw in France of the folly and frippery and imbecility of the ruling classes filled him with disgust, and he boldly prophesied their downfall.

The profusion with which the regent squandered the money of the people upon his favourites was unexampled.

Upon the favoured few the treasures of the kingdom were literally showered, and this at a time when the masses of the people groaned under the burdens of taxation and the public creditors clamoured in vain for payment.

It was this brood of cormorants which devoured Law's bank and kept the public treasury cleaned out, while French soldiers in Canada and India were left unpaid and unsupplied. It was this nest of vultures which picked the bones of the monarchy until they were bare and bleaching.

The regent gave 100,000 crowns for the favours of Madame d'Averne, and he gave 2,000,000 livres for a dia-

mond. The woman he bought for himself; the diamond he bought for the nation; the nation paid for both.

At no time in the history of the world did national morals reach a lower ebb than during the regency. Among the upper classes all decency was thrown aside. As one historian remarks, "Vice paraded itself with flags flying and trumpets blowing," and "no longer paid to virtue the tribute of hypocrisy." Having no taste and no capacity for any useful occupation under the sun, the lives of the nobles were devoted to pleasure, and by natural evolution pleasure degenerated into bestialities.

The mother of the regent wrote that "among people of quality I do not know a single example of mutual affection and fidelity" among married folk.

"I confess to you," wrote Madame de Maintenon, "that the women of this period are insupportable to me; their senseless and immodest dress, their tobacco, their wine, their gluttony, their slothfulness, all this I cannot suffer."

In this degrading race the regent and his daughter, the Duchess of Berry, led the rush, and their brazen immoralities disdained and defied all concealment.

The famous "little suppers" of the regency will be remembered long after his Triple Alliance shall have been forgotten. Every night during the eight years of his administration the regent gave himself up absolutely to sensual indulgence. During the mornings and the afternoons he received audiences, signed papers, gave instructions, attended councils, conferred with the ministers, or visited the king. By five or six in the evening the work of the day was done, business was banished, and the doors closed. After state affairs were dismissed for

the day, the regent could not be seen on business, no matter who came. Pestilence might rage, foreign war blaze, domestic insurrection threaten, but the regent could not be reached till next morning.

In the inner recesses of the Palais Royal, the palace built by Cardinal Richelieu, sat the regent, surrounded by a select circle of men of wit, gay libertines who mocked at all the virtues, and an equal number of women who were beautiful, young, winning, and shameless. The regent himself was the most dissolute of the men, his daughter the most abandoned of the women. Father and daughter revelled in company. Ceremony was laid aside, and clothing discarded; no servants were allowed to be present; the noble guests served one another. Ribald jests flew from mouth to mouth; lewd stories, obscene songs, blasphemous scoffings.

At one of these little suppers the "Judgment of Paris" was rehearsed. The regent's daughter took the part of Venus; Madame de Parabère represented Juno, and Madame d'Averne Minerva. The women were nude.

Throughout society religion was scoffed at, virtue derided, and senseless extravagance seized upon the nobility, almost without exception. Gambling, drunkenness, gluttony, sensuality of every sort, boldly faced down criticism, browbeat propriety, and made old-fashioned decency ashamed of itself.

Cardinal Dubois, who knew nothing of Church affairs, and who had bought the red hat for 8,000,000 livres, ruled while the nobles beggared and abased themselves. But for the clear head and tireless hands of this meanly born upstart, it is difficult to see how the government could have gone on at all.

A.D. 1723 He died in August, 1723, and in less than four months the regent, while jesting with one of his mistresses, was stricken with apoplexy and died at once.

Louis XV. had already been crowned at Rheims, and his legal majority declared. He was now in his fourteenth year, and was exceedingly handsome, but cold, indifferent, shy, and mentally sluggish.

The Duke of Bourbon succeeded the regent, and became prime minister. He was a haughty, avaricious, narrow-minded man, totally unfitted for the place. His mistress, Madame de Prie, governed him absolutely; but she had the good sense to realize Bourbon's incompetency, and she called to the administration of affairs a banker and tax-farmer named Pâris Duvernay. He was the youngest of four brothers, who, from poverty and obscurity, had risen, through the purlieus of administrative corruption, to influence and wealth.

The earliest edicts promulgated by this new ministry were worthy of the regent himself. The legal value of the currency was reduced one-half, and the interest on the public debt reduced to three and one-third per cent. Workmen refused to work for half wages, and shopkeepers declined to lower their prices. Bourbon filled the prisons with artisans and walled up the shops of the recalcitrant dealers. Great confusion ensued, and the clamour was so general and so loud that the odious laws were repealed.

The people were compelled, however, to pay an extraordinary tax of 23,000,000 livres, called the tax of the joyous accession, as a proof of their delight at the coronation of their young monarch, Louis XV. This tax was never again levied.

Bourbon also exacted a tax of two per cent upon all the productions of the soil and upon incomes.

To gain the ardent support of the Church, Bourbon rekindled the smouldering embers of religious persecution. Protestants were virtually outlawed and rewards offered for their destruction. Marriages between Calvinists were denounced as illegal, the abduction of their children encouraged, the seizing of their property made easy, and the punishment of death or the hideous slavery of the galleys inflicted upon Protestants who preached, listened to preaching, or harboured the wretched victims of religious hatred.

One man seventy years old was sent to the galleys for life for having attended a Protestant service. In 1759, a man eighty-three years old was still in the galleys, where he had passed twenty-five years as a punishment for the crime of having furnished shelter to a Protestant pastor. A woman was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 6000 livres for having spoken words of encouragement to a Protestant on his death-bed.

At Aigues-Mortes some women were confined in the tower of Constance, a dark, dismal turret, whose walls were eighteen feet thick and rose to a height of 110 feet. There were only two rooms, one above the other, and in these desolate vaults the women were buried alive. Their crime was that they had attended the Protestant service. In 1768, it so happened that the Prince of Beauvau and the Chevalier de Boufflers visited these prisons, and were touched with pity by what they saw.

Writing an account of it, the chevalier says: "We saw a great hall, without light or air, and within it fourteen women languishing in misery and tears. The comman-

dant, Beauvau, could not contain his emotion. For the first time these unhappy creatures saw compassion on a human face. They fell at his feet, bathed them in tears, and told of their sufferings. Alas! their only crime was to have been bred in the same faith as Henry IV. The youngest of these martyrs was over fifty years of age."

Beauvau released these miserable old women, and was censured for it by the government and denounced by the clergy.

The Regent Orleans had arranged a marriage between Louis XV. and the daughter of Philip V. of Spain. The young princess had been sent to Paris to be brought up, but Bourbon broke off the match, sent the girl back to her father, and married the French king to the poorest, ugliest, and humblest of all the eligible princesses of Europe, — Maria Leczinska, the daughter of a Polish king who had been chased out of his kingdom, and was now living on a French pension. When the courier brought the news of the proposed marriage to Maria and her father, they immediately fell upon their knees and poured out thanks to God.

A.D. 1725

As for the king of Spain, he poured out no thanks. He was angry, honestly and furiously angry. He believed that Bourbon had put this affront upon his daughter because he, Philip V., had refused to ennoble the husband of the De Prie woman.

"This one-eyed scoundrel," said the Spanish queen, alluding to Bourbon, "has sent our daughter back because the king would not create the husband of his harlot a grandee of Spain."

Two princesses of the royal House of France, one of them the widowed daughter-in-law of Philip, were im-

mediately expelled from Spain, and Philip V., renouncing the French alliance, entered into a treaty with Austria.

By this time, however (1725), there was not only a popular outcry against Bourbon, but Fleury, the king's preceptor, turned upon him. The young monarch sided with Fleury, dismissed Bourbon, banished the De Prie, and put Pâris Duvernay in the Bastille.

Thus terminated the ten years during which Louis XV. had been under the guardianship of the two collateral branches of the royal house, Orleans and Bourbon. During this period some beneficial changes had been made. The national militia had been organized, barracks built, and the quartering of troops in the dwellings of citizens discontinued. The system of roads for which France became so noted was adopted and carried out gradually by forced labour of the peasants.

The first of these paved roads was that from Paris to Rheims, made for the coronation of Louis XV. Schools were encouraged and learning fostered. The introduction of Freemasonry in France also dates from this period.

In 1724, the Bourse of Paris was organized and licensed. This was the first of the modern stock exchanges, and was a legitimate result of the new life which Law had put into the business world.

Prompted by Fleury, Louis XV. announced that henceforth he would be his own prime minister. This statement probably deceived no one, not even the king himself, for every one knew that Fleury was now become the prime minister and the real ruler.

Louis XV. was not wanting in mental qualities. His intelligence was of a high order, his judgment was good,

his information extensive. He seems to have thoroughly understood the system of government of which he was the head. He could be very firm, even immovable. He was rarely deceived by those who surrounded him. He saw through them all. But Louis was one of those mortals who are born listless, callous, indolent, and selfish. He was tired of his position from the first, and it was impossible to arouse his interest in anything connected with his office. He had no power of initiative, no purpose in living, no attachment to anything or anybody. He neither loved nor hated. He was as utterly apathetic as it was possible for a human being to be.

Stories are told of his cruelty in early life, but the truth seems to be that Louis XV. was not a revengeful, malicious, or cruel man; he was only indifferent to the sufferings of others, just as he was indifferent about all things.

He allowed people to manage the government, and to steer him first one way and then another, but his compliance was not the result of stupidity. All he demanded was a good easy time for himself; he cared nothing for others.

He allowed the Duke of Richelieu to plunge him into vice after he had reached a decorous middle age, but he seems to have yielded as much from curiosity and the craving for novelty as from anything else. He understood Richelieu as well as the keenest moralist understood him, and laughed at him when he assumed the rôle of a conquering military hero.

In his relations with his family, — his wife, son, and daughters, — he bears comparison with Louis XIV. and comes off with honours, while to his mistresses he was

not more fickle, unfeeling, or servile. No two men are controlled just alike, but the Maintenon governed Louis XIV. as completely, and as calamitously to the kingdom, as the Pompadour controlled Louis XV.

He speculated in corn for famine prices, and plundered the treasury whenever he could, but it does not appear that he also robbed his own relatives, as the Grand Monarch robbed his cousin, the Grande Mademoiselle.

Louis XV. was a bigot, and in the midst of his dissipations was deeply concerned about what he called his soul. To please the priests and secure impunity for his notoriously dissolute life, he persecuted the Protestants, but compared to the wholesale and inhuman barbarities of his grandfather his own persecutions were as a zephyr to a cyclone. He became a confirmed libertine, but he was no worse than those who preceded nor those who surrounded him.

Louis XV. was wasteful, extravagant, insolently disregardful of the miseries of the great masses of the people. But where the Grand Monarch squandered a hundred million dollars on Versailles, and a similar sum on Marly, his grandson built the Little Trianon, a modest mansion in one corner of the park of Versailles, where he could pass quiet days, amusing himself with amateur farming, and free from the pomp and pageantry which he despised.

In short, Louis XV. was the natural product of his environment, a smaller, more inert, and more amiable edition of his pompous, vindictive, and insanely conceited grandfather. He found the monarchy waiting for his ownership; he took his seat on the throne, as a traveller enters the vessel upon which he must travel to reach a

given destination. He did not build the ship, had nothing to do with equipping it, takes no particular interest in it. He simply finds it there, enters it, enjoys what pleasures it offers, concerns himself little about its management, takes everything as a matter of course, and cares absolutely nothing about the fate of the ship, or of the companions of his voyage, after he shall have left it. His only care is that it shall sail smoothly while he is on board. After that, the ship and the crew may go to Hades, so far as he is concerned.

Consequently Louis XV. is historically almost devoid of character. No individuality of his stamps itself upon any government policy, foreign or domestic. So far as the course of events is concerned, he might as well have been a figure of speech, a metaphor, an abstraction. He sat at the council-board, but his handsome face wore no expression, his lips uttered no words of advice. He appeared at the head of his army, but he issued no command, led no charge, endured no danger nor privation. His soldiers fought and died, his generals planned and executed; he did nothing but look on.

So it was, always. Fleury governed, or Choiseul governed, or the Pompadour governed, or Maupeou governed; Louis himself never even claimed to govern. He seemed to see the drift of things, seemed to realize that the old régime was going to pieces, but he was resolved not to worry over it or try to remodel it. "It will last as long as I live; those who come after me may do the best they can," said the clear-sighted monarch, who had lived all his days among men whose characters he could not respect and among women he could but despise. He knew they were corrupt to the core; he knew the old

régime was rotten to the heart; he knew the courtiers who fawned about him cared nothing for him, and he cared nothing for them. He sank into listless vice, wallowed indolently in the foulest mire, and died, at last, in the consolations of religion and the blessed anticipations of faith.

The administration of Fleury lasted thirteen years, although he was seventy-three at the time of its commencement.

One of his first measures was to reduce the taxes and to fix the value of the silver mark, which he raised to fifty-one livres, and which has undergone but little variation since.

The value of the currency being thus fixed and stable, the good results were soon shown in the growth of commerce and the increase of general business.

He weakened public credit still further, however, by arbitrarily reducing the interest on annuities, which was the more unjust, since he victimized only the smallest pensioners, those who enjoyed the large pensions not being molested.

Being a timorous old man, and realizing that France needed peace, he reconciled her with Spain, and came to a good understanding with Austria also. A.D. 1726

The nation prospered under his mild administration. Greater revenues were derived from the same taxes; the interest on the public debt was paid promptly, and its principal reduced. In the two years prior to the war of the Austrian succession there was a surplus of 15,000,000 livres annually, a phenomenon which had not occurred in the memory of man, and which did not occur again under the old régime.

A.D. 1733 In 1733, Augustus II., king of Poland, died, and the throne was claimed by Stanislaus, the father-in-law of Louis XV., and by the elector of Saxony. Austria and Russia supported the elector with their troops, and Stanislaus was once more under the necessity of taking to his heels. Public opinion in France compelled Fleury to aid Stanislaus. Fifteen hundred men were sent,—by no means a sufficient number,—and they were all captured.

A.D. 1733 Still spurred onward by public opinion, Fleury made treaties with Spain and Savoy, secured the neutrality of England and Holland, and sent out two armies against Austria, one under Berwick to Italy, and the other, under Villars, to the Rhine.

Berwick took Kehl, laid siege to Philippsburg, and was killed in battle. Villars, after two successful campaigns, died at Turin. His successors conquered the Milanese, and installed the Spanish Infante on the throne of Naples and Sicily, thus giving other crowns to the House of Bourbon. France's position was now very powerful, but Fleury was timid, and peace was made. Spain gained largely, at the expense of Austria. Nothing was ceded to France directly, but Stanislaus, ex-king of Poland, was given the duchies of Lorraine and Bar, A.D. 1738 which, at his death, were to revert to France. Such was the Treaty of Vienna.

A.D. 1740 In 1740 Charles VI., emperor of Germany, died, leaving as sole heir to his hereditary dominions his daughter, Maria Theresa. By treaties with the neighbouring rulers he had, as he believed, secured for her a peaceful accession, but the breath was hardly gone from his body before five claimants appeared to challenge her title.

The king of Spain, the elector of Saxony, and the elector of Bavaria each laid claim to the entire heritage, by right of blood. The king of Sardinia claimed the duchy of Milan, and the king of Prussia seized the four duchies of Silesia.

Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, is one of the "great men" of history. Like most of the members of that order, he was unscrupulous, ungrateful, cruel, and treacherous. He played politics with a callous double-facedness that was Machiavellian in its perfect art. He could lie like Queen Elizabeth, could be as merciless as Cæsar, as vindictive as Philip II., and as cynical as Sylla. He had no belief in God, no faith in man. He deserted and betrayed his allies whenever his interests prompted it, making war to increase his territories, his power, or his fame.

His father had left him a fine army and a full treasury, and he saw that Maria Theresa had been left with neither. It seemed the easiest thing in the world to spring upon this helpless girl and rob her; so the great Frederick, without preface or prelude, poured his troops across the frontier and took possession of Silesia.

The Austrian army met the Prussians at Molwitz, and a battle followed. The day seemed to be going against Frederick, and he was advised to leave the field. He galloped away and his troops continued to fight. The Austrians were beaten, and the glad tidings found the king many miles from the battle-field, at a mill where he had taken refuge. A.D. 1741

The Prussian General Schwerin, who had advised Frederick to run, said long afterwards that the king never forgave him. Frederick was a great talker and a voluminous writer, but in all his talk and in all his writing

there was never an allusion to his flight from the field of Molwitz.

Under the advice of the Count of Belle-Isle, and against Fleury's warnings, France entered into an alliance with Frederick against Maria Theresa.

A more fatal mistake no nation ever made. Without the powerful help of France, Frederick, in all human probability, would have been forced by Austria to surrender Silesia, and Prussia would not have made such gigantic strides onward. French soldiers died and French treasure was squandered to pave the way for Sedan and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine.

In pursuance of the treaty with Frederick, an army of 40,000 French invaded the Austrian dominions. Linz was captured, and Vienna might have fallen had an attempt on it been made; but the army, instead, was led into Bohemia. Prague fell, and the fortunes of Maria Theresa seemed desperate. With heroic courage, however, she continued the struggle, arousing her faithful Hungarians by personal appeals. Her forces entered
A.D. Munich in 1742, but were defeated by Frederick at Cho-
1742 tusitz, and she concluded a separate treaty with him, in which she yielded Silesia. That was all he wanted, and he left his French allies in the lurch.

Their position was critical. Deserted by the Prussians, surrounded by enemies, they were far from France, and found themselves on the point of being made prisoners of war. It was only by leaving Prague at night, under cover of darkness, and undergoing fearful hardships in forced marches, that the French troops escaped at all. Their losses were great.

England, in the same year, declared war against Spain

because she refused to open her colonies to English trade, and began to seize French ships everywhere, because the commerce of France was becoming a dangerous rival. By subsidizing Maria Theresa liberally, England encouraged her to continue the war, which had now fallen wholly upon France. Fifty thousand English and German troops A.D. 1743 advanced to the valley of the Main, and won the battle of Dettingen over the French, who now fell back to the Rhine.

In order to revive the dispirited armies of France, it was thought advisable to have the king, Louis XV., put himself at the head; and accordingly he went to the wars, carrying along with him his mistresses, as his grandfather had been used to do.

At Metz the king fell sick, and it was thought that he was dying. The greatest consternation prevailed at A.D. 1744 Paris. All classes of people were plunged in the deepest grief. Cries of lamentation were heard on every side. Strong men wept in the streets. At the church of Notre Dame alone, 6000 prayers for the king's recovery were ordered.

So great an outburst of affection gave occasion for the name of the "Well-beloved," which was afterwards used to designate this particular Bourbon. He lived long enough to wear out the title and to exhaust the love. When Damiens stabbed him in 1757, only 600 prayers for the king's recovery were ordered, according to the account-books of Notre Dame; and when he actually lay dying in 1775, the books show only three.

In the meanwhile, Frederick the Great became alarmed at the progress Austria was making. Her treaties with England and with Russia made Prussia tremble for

Silesia; Frederick therefore once more took the field, and invaded Bohemia as far as Prague. This diversion helped the French very much.

A.D. 1745 At this time Marshal Saxe, one of the 163 bastards of his late Majesty, Augustus the Strong, king of Poland, was in the service of France, and gained a great victory in the Netherlands. At the battle of Fontenoy, he defeated the English and Dutch, and as a result the most important cities of the Low Countries capitulated to the French.

Frederick the Great beat the Austrians in two battles, so Maria Theresa again came to terms with him, ceding him Silesia. This defection once more left the French without an ally in Germany.

A.D. 1746 England freed herself from the Stuart Pretender at the battle of Culloden and was ready to coöperate more vigorously than ever with Austria. Italy was invaded by the forces of Maria Theresa, and the battle of Piacenza won. The allied forces of the English, Austrians, and Sardinians attempted the invasion of France, but they were driven back.

Marshal Saxe gained the battle of Raucoux in 1746, and in the following year that of Lawfeld. Bergen-op-Zoom, the "impregnable," fell into his hands. Following up his successes, he invaded Holland, and laid siege to Maes-

A.D. 1747 tricht. Russia had placed at the disposal of the enemies of France an army of 37,000 men and a fleet of fifty ships.

France was thus encircled by foes. Not only did the war rage in Europe, it went on in America and India also. The English captured Louisburg and Cape Breton in America, but in India the brave Dupleix held out and severely repulsed the British attack upon Pondicherry.

In 1748, the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, A.D. 1748 whereby France surrendered all her conquests in the Netherlands. Of all her brilliant victories, no fruit was secured. She found her navy reduced to two vessels, and her national debt increased 1,200,000,000 livres.

By this treaty, Prussia retained Silesia, Spain got the duchies of Parma, Piacenza, and Guestella for the Infante Don Philip, while England got Nova Scotia and the monopoly of the slave-trade. France had won many battles and suffered no serious defeat, yet she asked nothing and got nothing. She even agreed to the humiliating demands of England that the French fortifications at Dunkirk should be demolished and the luckless Stuart Pretender driven out of France.

Eight years of peace now followed. They were prosperous years for the kingdom. Commerce thrived, home industries took a new vigour, and the colonies abroad developed rapidly. Dupleix dreamed of the great empire in India which afterwards fell to England. The sugar and coffee of the French Antilles captured the European markets and drove out the similar products of England. Louisiana began to flourish and New Orleans to give promise of her present importance. In Canada, France held an empire whose value the home government did not appreciate. Had a statesman like Coligny or Colbert been at the helm during the reign of Louis XV. France might now be the nation which boasts that its drum-beat follows the course of the sun round the earth. She held the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, the grandest waterways in the New World; she held in India a precedence which needed nothing but support from the mother country; she held in Europe, in Asia, and in America

the vastest possibilities that ever tempted a nation to effort, — and she lost it all because her rulers were incompetent. Thousands of Frenchmen must have realized then, as thousands do now, the colossal mistakes the government was making, but the situation admitted of no remedy. The governmental system was so vicious that those who understood could do nothing, while those who could do something did not understand. Only the select few governed France, and among these select few no statesman appeared.

A.D. 1754 In 1754 war broke out again. The first spark blazed up in the New World. George Washington, then a British subject, at the head of a small band surprised a French officer, Jumonville, who was carrying to the English an order to evacuate the valley of the Ohio, which both nations claimed. Jumonville and some of his party were killed.

This was the first blood of the conflict. Then, without any declaration of war, the English seized more than 300 French vessels, loaded with cargoes to the value of 30,000,000 livres, and their sailors (10,000) were pressed into the English service.

Making free use of its gold, the English government subsidized Frederick the Great, and he became their ally.

A.D. 1756 Austria made overtures to France, and thus the hereditary foes became friends — in an evil hour for France. Russia, Sweden, and Saxony also sided with Austria and France.

A French expedition, under that confirmed rake, Richelieu, had the good fortune to stumble upon a fine conquest. Minorca was captured, and the English fleet, under Admiral Byng, was beaten off. The English soothed their chagrin by shooting Byng.

Frederick the Great took a bold initiative, as usual, overran Saxony, to the helpless amazement of its elector, surrounded the Saxon army, gave it the privilege of being absorbed in his own, and, having duly swallowed it, A.D. 1757 marched away, and won the bloody battle of Prague.

He was defeated by the Austrians at Kollin, and, had his enemies acted in concert, they might have crushed him. As it was, he was so closely hemmed in by Russians, Austrians, and French that he gave himself up for lost, and sued for peace. His enemies also thought he was lost, and rejected his overtures.

The incompetency of the French commanders was Frederick's salvation.

Richelieu, by some mysterious chance, had got the English army, under the Duke of Cumberland, completely surrounded.

By all the rules of war, as set down in the books, the English should have been made prisoners. Richelieu, however, had either never heard of the rules, or disapproved of them, for he made a treaty with the English, letting them all walk out of the pen. The English government coolly disavowed the treaty, and her soldiers, who should have been prisoners, went to fighting again.

Soubise, another French commander, was perhaps even less fitted for the post than Richelieu. With an army of 50,000 he was put to flight by Frederick, who had but 20,000. This defeat of Rossbach is one of the most humiliating in French annals.

Napoleon, after Jena, carried away the monumental stone by which the Prussians had commemorated their triumph.

At Rossbach the Prussian loss was 400; the French,

3000 in killed and 7000 in prisoners. They lost, also, sixty-three cannon.

A.D. 1758 The French were defeated at Krefeld, and the army, so badly led, became demoralized.

William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, poured money into Frederick's coffers without stint, and the war went on. He defeated the Russians at Zorndorf, and the Austrians at Hochkirk, where he lost 10,000 men. At A.D. 1759 Kunersdorf the Russians gave him a tremendous beating; 20,000 men were slain on each side, and Frederick was so much overcome for the moment that he threw up the command of the army and talked of suicide. Berlin fell into the hands of his foe and was held to ransom.

The victory of Minden, gained by Ferdinand of Brunswick, revived Frederick's hopes. He defeated the Austrians at Liegnitz, delivered his capital, and forced Daun, A.D. 1761 the Austrian commander, into a dangerous position near Torgau. But Prussia was almost exhausted, and during the campaign of 1761 Frederick maintained the defensive.

A.D. 1762 At a very fortunate moment for him, the czarina, Elizabeth of Russia, died, and was succeeded by Peter III., an ardent admirer of the Prussian king, whereupon the Russian army was at once called off and Frederick was relieved from danger on the north and east.

On the land the war was not fortunate for France; on the sea it was destructive. The English blockaded her forts, seized her vessels, descended upon her coasts and ravaged them.

No money and no reënforcements were sent to India, and Lord Clive demolished the French power in the East.

In Canada, Montcalm was left with 5000 troops to oppose 40,000 English. He was not supplied with pro-

visions, nor with powder and shot. The Pompadour was lavishing millions upon her frivolous favourites at Paris, while the soldiers of France were left unclothed, unfed, and unsupplied with ammunition.

What else could come but disaster? Montcalm laboured like a hero, fought like a hero, died like a hero, but his gallant life was wasted. Canada was lost. France struck her colours, and fell back before Great Britain in America as well as in India.

After the death of Fleury in 1743 the administration had nominally fallen into the hands of the Count of Argenson, but they did not long remain so. A capricious woman, the Marquise de Pompadour, was the mistress of the inert king, and the ministers came and went at her whim.

Voltaire said they "tumbled after one another like the figures of a magic lantern."

At length the Duke of Choiseul secured the favour of the Pompadour, and he became minister. A.D. 1761

In 1761, the Family Compact was signed. By this treaty the various branches of the Bourbon family united, —France, Spain, the Two Sicilies, and Parma and Piacenza.

England immediately declared war on Spain, seized Manila and the Philippines, Havana, twelve ships of the line, and prizes valued at 100,000,000 francs.

The powers, however, had all grown tired of the war, and peace was made. A.D. 1763

England gained Canada, Acadia, Cape Breton, Grenada, the Grenadines, St. Vincent, Dominica, Tobago, Senegal, Minorca, and Florida.

France lost all these, and spent 1,350,000,000 while

doing so, — to say nothing of her brave soldiers dead in the Old World and in the New.

Prussia kept Silesia. Spain recovered Cuba and Manila, but gave up Florida to the English. As compensation, France ceded Louisiana to Spain.

This war, as Frederick the Great impressively said, commenced "on account of two or three wretched huts (in the Ohio valley); the English had gained by it 2000 leagues of territory, and humanity lost a million men."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH (*continued*)

THE remaining events of importance which marked the reign of Louis XV. were the union of Lorraine to France, upon the death of Stanislaus, ex-king of Poland (1765); the conquest of Corsica in 1768; the suppression of the Jesuits in 1764; and the destruction of the Parliaments in 1771.

Against the dark background of his times, the character of Stanislaus stands out pleasantly. He was a Polish nobleman, the friend of Charles XII. of Sweden, and to the influence of that monarch he owed his election to the throne of Poland, in 1704. The "inspired madman," Charles XII., dared fate once too often, and met his doom at Pultowa. He wore himself out beating the Russians, and followed them much too far into the frozen wilds of their country, — an example which might have warned Napoleon, but did not. Great was his fall, and Stanislaus fell with him, — Russia having espoused the cause of Augustus II., the Strong, who became king of Poland. Stanislaus fled, and for many years was a wanderer upon the earth. At length he found refuge in the little city of Meissenburg. The French protected him, and allowed him a pension, and he led a quiet, simple life, fond of his studies, active in pious works, ready with his charities, and devoted to his family.

His daughter was the good little girl of the fairy tale, and one day a great king came and took her for his wife.

She was greatly astonished, and so was her father; so much so that they prayed over it, as has been already told.

Louis XV. had a royal way of doing many things, and, after marrying the daughter, he did not neglect her sire. The magnificent palace of Chambord and its imperial domains were assigned to him for a residence. There the good Stanislaus found a tranquil splendour, a luxurious security which he never could have found as king of so rude and insubordinate a people as the Poles.

Augustus the Strong died, however, in 1733, and the claims of Stanislaus were revived by the French. It does not appear that the ex-king himself was anxious about the matter. On the whole he preferred the actual comforts of Chambord to the possible grandeurs of Poland. But the politicians would not have it so, and Stanislaus was compelled to be a candidate for the vacant throne. He took no active part in the campaign, but he put himself in the hands of his friends, as many other unfortunate citizens of various countries have done.

Royal elections in Poland were singular things. Each noble had a vote, and each vote had its price.

The French minister, who had control of the canvass of Stanislaus, wrote to his government: "The election of Stanislaus can only be secured by money. Formerly one could buy a Pole for a moderate sum, but this is no longer so."

The Austrian emperor also had a candidate in the field, the elector of Saxony, son of the deceased Augustus the Strong. The emperor likewise understood what was nec-

essary to convince a Polish nobleman, and two strong wagons, heavily guarded, rolled through the streets of Warsaw to the emperor's residence. The rumour was, that these wagons contained the Austrian campaign fund.

The French government sent the Marquis of Monte, its minister, 11,000,000 francs, and the greater part of the sum was used in buying votes for Stanislaus. The money was evidently put where it would do the most good, for Stanislaus was elected. Sixty thousand Polish nobles assembled in the open plain on horseback, magnificently arrayed, with guns in their hands, with enthusiasm in their souls, and with French bribes in their pockets, and boisterously proclaimed Stanislaus king of the country.

Having done this, the Polish grandees fired their guns, dashed here and there on their horses, shouted lustily, drank freely, and rode off to their homes, leaving Stanislaus to hold his place as best he could.

The successful candidate found himself in a most embarrassing situation. He had no army, no money in the treasury, no system of taxation by which he could levy on his enthusiastic supporters, and a rival candidate was looming up in the distance and preparing to contest the election, — a contest which promised to be formidable, for it was backed up by Russian troops and Austrian money.

While Stanislaus was reflecting upon the situation, the Russian army advanced upon Warsaw. As none of the Polish nobles whom he had bought came forward to fight for him, Stanislaus took a midnight stroll away from Warsaw and went to Dantzic. The Russians entered Warsaw without opposition, and the elector of Saxony was peacefully enthroned under the name of Augustus III.

Stanislaus remained in Dantzic, a prey to melancholy, but after the capture of the small force of French soldiers which was sent to his relief, he disguised himself as a peasant, fled, and after enduring many hardships made good his escape into Prussia.

At the general peace which followed the war of the Polish succession, France insisted that Stanislaus must be provided for, and accordingly he was given, for life, the duchies of Lorraine and Bar.

This ended his wanderings. For thirty years he ruled in Lorraine, to the delight of himself and the happiness of his subjects. He was mild, charitable, and wise. He loved his people and loved to do good. He was easy of access, talked to all he met, took a humane interest in everybody, established academies, founded a hospital for disabled soldiers, endowed a public library, supported missionaries, gave dowries to poor girls, built churches, and fed the hungry.

He paid his bills every month like a gentleman, discarded the foolish and tiresome pomps of courts, smoked his pipe in peace undisturbed by wars and dreams of empire, loved good eating, good drinking, and a congenial woman, but went to bed regularly every night at honest hours, and was almost always sober.

His greatest reform and work of benevolence consisted in appointing five councillors, learned in the law, and paid by the State, whose duty it was to give advice, free of charge, to all who applied for it. In this simple and economical manner he sought to free his beloved subjects from the voracity of the lawyers.

Stanislaus was known far and wide as a friend to men of learning, and many flocked to his court.

To this amiable monarch death came most cruelly: his clothing caught on fire, and he was fatally burned.

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The conquest of Corsica was an event destined to exert a mighty influence upon the future of France, for by this acquisition she was to obtain Napoleon Bonaparte.

Corsica, a small island in the Mediterranean, belonged to Genoa. In 1729 the Corsicans revolted, and a war of forty years followed, which destroyed the authority of Genoa. She offered to sell out her claims to France, — land, rebels, and all. Choiseul, casting round to find some foe which France could whip, believed that Corsica was small enough, and he therefore bought up the Genoese title.

French troops were landed, and sharp fighting ensued. At first the Corsicans beat the French; reënforcements were sent, however, and the brave islanders were overpowered.

The Corsican leader, Paoli, became not only the hero of his own people, but achieved a fame which has securely preserved his name. It took 20,000 French troops, aided by liberal briberies of many Corsican leaders, to subdue the island. Charles Bonaparte, father of Napoleon, was one of those who were bought over to the French interest, — according to Bourrienne, who reports the son as saying, "My father should have followed Paoli's fortune and have fallen with him."

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The Society of Jesus had been for a long time unpopular in France. The Parliament set its face against them,

and a long and bitter struggle followed. The Jesuits worked in secret, obeyed implicitly the orders which came from Rome, used the most unholy means in reaching their aims, and avowed principles which were subversive of state authority. They had stirred up civil war in France, had time and again set her people to cutting each other's throats, had assassinated her kings, and betrayed the true interest of the kingdom, sometimes to Spain, sometimes to Austria, always to Rome.

The confessors of the French kings and of their mistresses were usually Jesuits. A Jesuit priest had murdered Henry IV. because he tolerated Protestant worship, and because he was preparing to assail Catholic Austria. Jesuit priests had secured the repeal of the toleration act, called the Edict of Nantes, and delivered France over to the horrors of religious persecution.

The middle classes hated them. Scholars wrote against them. Pascal, in his "Provincial Letters," had exposed their teachings and their practices.

In 1713 the Jesuits had persuaded Pope Clement XI. to issue the bull "Unigenitus," which condemned as heretical the teachings of Cornelis Jansen, who had been bishop of Ypres seventy-five years earlier. Factions were at once formed in the Church, and for half a century a furious religious quarrel raged.

So high did the feeling arise that Catholic bishops refused to administer the last sacrament to dying Catholics who were tainted with the heresy of Jansenism.

In 1732 the Parliament of Paris had condemned the clergy for their intolerance and enacted penalties against them; the spiritual authorities upheld the clergy, and

threatened excommunication against those who administered the sacrament to Catholic heretics; the government was irresolute, and angered both Parliament and clergy. Public sentiment supported the Parliament.

In 1761 there came before Parliament a law case which was the ruin of the Jesuits.

At Martinique the Jesuits had a mission, which devoted its energies partly to saving souls and partly to selling merchandise. In 1747 Father Lavalette was made superior at the mission, and he established a bank, erected great warehouses, dealt in sugar, coffee, and slaves, and did a large and prosperous business. His ships were on every sea, his correspondents in all the great cities. On complaint of other merchants, Father Lavalette was ordered by the French government to confine himself to spiritual affairs; and he promised to do so, but did not.

The disastrous wars into which France plunged ruined thousands of French merchants, Father Lavalette among them. He drew bills to the amount of 1,000,000 livres on the Lioncys, his correspondents at Marseilles, against merchandise which he had shipped from Martinique, and they accepted the drafts.

English semi-pirates fell in with Lavalette's goods and unfeelingly appropriated them. The bills became due, the merchandise did not arrive, the Lioncys were in great distress, as is usual in such cases, and they asked the Jesuits of Marseilles to take up the drafts. Most unwisely they refused. The Lioncys were driven into bankruptcy, but their creditors determined to collect the dishonoured bills out of the Jesuit society.

Suit was begun upon the idea that Lavalette was not

engaged in business for himself individually, but for the Order of Jesus.

The consular court at Marseilles so decided, and gave judgment against the order.

An appeal was taken to the Parliament at Paris. By the time the trial came on, all France was an interested observer of this lawsuit, and as many people as the great hall of the court could hold were present, eager listeners and spectators. The sentiment was all one way. Every ruling unfavourable to the Jesuits was loudly applauded. The judges demanded to see the constitution and by-laws of the society, and accordingly these were produced in court and examined.

The Parliament decided that under its organization the society as a whole was responsible for Lavalette's debts, and gave judgment against its property wherever found.

Not satisfied with deciding the question before it, Parliament began to inquire whether such a society, bound by such rules, was not dangerous to the State.

Greatly alarmed, the Jesuits set secret machinery in motion, and the king ordered Parliament to pause, directing that nothing further should be done for twelve months, and that, in the meantime, the books of the order should be sent to him.

But the Parliament took a bold step. It defied the king and published two decrees. It condemned the Jesuit books and ordered them to be burnt, and it further forbade citizens to join the order, and directed their schools to be closed.

Of course this law-court, called the Parliament, had no authority to pass or enforce these decrees, but

Louis XV. loved his ease and did not long for a fight. He saw that the Jesuits were almost universally hated, and that a tremendous turmoil would result if he undertook to fight their battles; so he let the decrees of Parliament stand.

It is believed, also, that Madame de Pompadour hated the Jesuits, and that Choiseul did not love them.

The decrees of Parliament were enforced; the property of the society was levied on and sold; even the ornaments of their churches and their beautiful paintings were auctioned off to the highest bidder; their schools were closed, and the dress of the order proscribed.

In 1764 the order of Jesuits was formally suppressed by royal decree; and the example set in France was followed in Spain, Portugal, Naples, Parma, Venice, and Bavaria.

In 1767 the Parliament of Paris declared them public enemies, ordered them to leave the kingdom, and asked the king to demand of the Pope the dissolution of the Society of Jesus.

In July, 1773, appeared the papal decree in which the once most powerful order was abolished. Frederick the Great and Catherine of Russia, neither of whom was possessed of any religious belief whatever, were the only rulers who gave shelter and protection to the persecuted Jesuits.

In 1814, Pius VII. restored the order of the Jesuits, and it is once again powerful. Working by secret methods, in dark ways, toward the same old ends, the Jesuits are rapidly regaining ground. "History repeats itself," because its lessons are so soon forgotten.

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In abolishing the Parliament, Louis XV. had accomplished really a radical and beneficial reform, without intending to do so. His purpose was to remove an obstacle to his absolutism. He was impatient of the existence of a body of lawyers which had the legal right to protest against royal edicts. It seemed to him to be an inconsistency, an impertinence, for any one, high or low, to question his supreme power. His conception of his absolute authority was expressed by him in 1766, in these words: "In my person alone is the sovereign authority; legislative power belongs to me alone; public order emanates from me; I am its supreme guardian."

The supreme judicial power in France was vested in the several Parliaments. Originally a judge obtained his office by paying for it. The king openly sold the commission, and when once paid for, it became the property of the holder, and he could sell it or bequeath it to his son. These tribunals had no legislative power; they were simply law-courts, and rather poor ones at that.

The lawyers of that day were about on a par with the doctors, the priests, the nobles, the king, and the people. The doctors either bled and purged the victim, burnt him with red-hot irons, plastered him with flayed animals, soothed him with soup made from water and a gold coin, or they hoodooed him with some charm, mystic rite, and formula which would have carried delight and faith to the soul of a naked Hottentot. The priests were as far away from God as the limitations of human nature would permit, and they worked miracles with an ease which somewhat glutted the market. The nobles greedily contended for every privilege and power which had once gone hand in hand with duties, but which now represented nothing

but vanity, cupidity, and tyranny. The king had fallen from the high plane of divine right to rule, as God would rule, — justly, toilfully, benevolently, as a steward in charge of a vast trust, — and now conceived himself to be owner in fee of millions of French acres, revenues, and people, without accountability to God or man.

And the people likewise had estrayed afar from the path of safety. They were ignorant enough to satisfy even the clergy; they were poor enough to be meek, and thus leave the nobles no room for complaint; they were stupidly unconscious of and indifferent to what was going on in that world where the consecrated king and his elect were deigning to exist and to spend all the money which millions of peasants could dig out of the earth.

There were as many different sorts of law in France as there were parliaments. Feudal privileges which are recognized by the Parliament of one province were denied by the courts of another; a tax that was legal in Normandy was not so in Burgundy; trade-guilds claimed monopolies which were admitted by the Parliament of Paris and denied by that of Marseilles. Endless confusion thus prevailed.

The decisions reached by these judges were such as the times demanded. For instance, in the city of Abbeville a crucifix was mutilated by some person unknown, and several boys were arrested on suspicion. It was shown at the trial that one of them, named La Barre, had been guilty of some profane songs, some irreverent words, and had studied the philosophical dictionary of Voltaire; he was therefore condemned at Abbeville to have his tongue cut out, his head cut off, his body burnt, his ashes scat-

tered to the winds; and the Parliament at Paris confirmed the sentence.

There was no evidence that the boy had broken the crucifix; he was not even convicted of having done so. He was found guilty of singing profane songs and of making jeering remarks about the worship of the cross. Probably the most damning proof against him was that he had read a book of Voltaire's. At any rate, the learned court found a verdict against the book also.

The poor boy was put to the torture, was ground and wrenched until he was well-nigh dead; then he was led to the scaffold and his head struck off, after which the executioner took Voltaire's book and destroyed it. This was on the morning of July 1, 1766.

And the populace, steeped in the infamies of superstitions which would degrade the savages of darkest Africa, dispersed contentedly to their dinners, their small-talk, and their prayers.

La Barre's fate was enough of itself to eternally damn the lawyers concerned in it, but this case was by no means the only one of the sort, nor the worst.

In response to popular clamour, the Parliament of Paris, without any proof whatsoever, judicially murdered Lally-Tollendal, the hero of the struggle of France against England in India. He had supported the falling fortunes of his country, without succour, in a distant land; he was beset by the most powerful foes on earth; was denied aid by the king's feeble and corrupt government, and lost, after desperate resistance, the French domains, which could have been saved by one-tenth of the troops wasted to please Maria Theresa, and one-twentieth of the wealth lavished upon the Pompadour or the Du Barry.

Returning to France, Lally was tried for treason, was convicted, was sent to the scaffold with a gag in his mouth, and executed with every circumstance of petty meanness that could break the great heart of a brave, proud, and unfortunate man.

A few years after his death, this same Parliament of Paris reviewed its former decision, and reversed it. But Lally-Tollendal was dead.

These Parliaments were also corrupt. Arthur Young says, in his "Travels in France," that he found Frenchmen, here and there, who were willing to say something in defence of the government, the Parliaments excepted. Nobody spoke a good word for them. Every one condemned them as venal, tyrannical, utterly corrupt. "Upon almost every cause that came before them interest was openly made with the judges; and woe betided the man who, with a cause to support, had no means of conciliating favour, either by the beauty of a handsome wife, or other means."

It must be said, however, for the Parliament of Paris, that whatever spirit of protest there was abroad against the tyranny of the king found expression there. The edicts of the monarch could not be legally enforced until they had been registered on the books of that body. The Parliament could refuse to register, and thus thwart the royal will for the moment. The king must then come in person to Parliament, or he could require its members to come before him, and he could in person order them to register the decree. In this case, they were bound to do so. They had no legal right to refuse. Such an extraordinary assemblage of the Parliament was called "a bed of justice." The right of protest, therefore, was a very

barren one, leading to nothing, and yet the lawyers went on protesting for several hundred years, until they finally protested the French monarchy out of existence.

The Parliament of Paris had protested when Francis I. surrendered the liberties of the French Church to Rome; it had protested against Richelieu and Mazarin; it had protested against the encroachments of Louis XIV.; it had protested against the worst edicts of the regency; it had repulsed the king on the question of the Jesuits; and it was now to resist him resolutely on the right claimed by him to forbid their trying certain cases.

Nothing shows the rapid strides which the spirit of inquiry and of independence was making in France more plainly than the conduct of the Parliament at the beginning of Louis' reign and at its close.

In 1732, when the judges had condemned the intolerant priests on the question of the bull "Unigenitus," the king bade them let religious affairs alone. They went to him and presented a remonstrance. He replied: "I have told you my will; it must be executed. I want no remonstrances and no answers. Be more obedient and attend to your legal duties." The president of the Parliament was about to make a remark, but the king said, "Be still," and the president was silent. Another one of the judges presented a written paper. "Tear it up," said the king. It was torn up accordingly.

Retiring to their halls, the judges determined to imitate the Roman senators. They defied the king, who promptly sent them away from Paris into the country. This cruel punishment soon broke the Roman spirit of the judges, and they contritely made their peace with the offended monarch. "We know," said they, "that he is

master,—it is for him to command and for us to obey."

Now, however, the Parliament had become more stubborn.

The king ordered the judges to suspend the trial of the Duke of Aiguillon, who had been accused of corrupt practices in his government of Brittany. The Parliament of Paris protested against the denial of justice, and the provincial courts boldly took sides with it.

Chancellor Maupeou, a resolute and able man, was now at the head of the king's government, and he met the crisis with remarkable courage. He issued an edict in which all the misdeeds of the Parliament were recited, and in which they were bidden to cease their opposition to the royal mandate.

The judges were indignant at this decree, and popular sympathy was with them. The Duke of Aiguillon was believed to be a criminal, and the effort of the king to screen him was thought to be the result of some intrigue.

The judges announced that so long as the insulting edict remained in force, they would hear no more cases. If they were not to be allowed to try the Duke of Aiguillon, they would not try anybody.

Thus the administration of justice came to a full stop. Litigants could not get their cases heard, lawyers could make no fees, clerks and bailiffs could earn no salaries and no perquisites. Here was a pretty state of things, truly. Litigants with untried cases growled; lawyers bereft of fees growled; minor court officials, shorn of costs, growled; and the Parisian public, sympathizing with them all, growled likewise.

But Maupeou was full of pluck. He decided that

judges who refused to adjudicate should be ousted from their judgeships, resolving to abolish the whole business and make new courts, fashioned after better models.

Late in the night of January 19, 1771, each judge received a call from two of the king's soldiers, who asked to be told briefly, yes or no, whether the judge meant to obey the king and begin to try cases again. A majority of the judges answered no. Those who answered yes gathered courage next morning and joined their colleagues.

Thereupon Maupeou exiled them all to various parts of provincial France and abolished their offices.

He created six new courts, on a vastly improved plan, and during the remainder of the reign of Louis XV. they administered justice in France.

The dissolution of the Parliament of Paris created an immense stir. It quickened the spirit of inquiry and of innovation. The tearing down of the judicial fabric shook the entire edifice of the monarchy. If a Parliament were worthless and could be abolished, were not other institutions of the kingdom worthless, and could they not be abolished also?

The Parliament of Paris, the only body which could protest in behalf of the people against usurpations of the king, was gone,—how were the people now to be heard?

"Convoke the States General," said the Parliaments of Dijon, Brittany, and Normandy.

This demand, so ominous to the monarchy, found favour among the people, and from that time it gathered force.

But Louis XV. was immovable. Every prince of the blood, but one, solemnly protested against his action as a

violation of the fundamental law of the realm. The old king, who is usually represented as being so weak, not only refused to yield, but he seized their protest, threw it into the fire, and forbade the princes to appear again in his presence.

Calling his judges and officials before him, he said, "You hear my will; I forbid any deliberation contrary to my edicts; I shall never change."

Compare this speech with that made forty years before, and it will be seen that they are in substance the same. Times had changed, the people had changed, the Parliaments had changed, but the king was the same, and he remained so.

At a later day, when Louis XVI. had convoked the States General and loosed the wild horses of political passion, the older courtiers would say, "Ah, if Louis XV. had lived, this would never have happened." It might have happened, nevertheless, but it would never have come in that way. Louis XV. was hopelessly deficient in aggressiveness, but he was full of the power of inertia, of resistance to governmental change.

If Louis XVI. had not reëstablished the Parliaments, it is difficult to see how the spirit of revolt would have found its nucleus. With the privilege of protest which the Parliament of Paris held and exercised, it was becoming increasingly formidable. Louis XV. realized this and snuffed it out. Louis XVI. did not see it, and called them back. They were not made more timid by their victory, and the right of protest grew rapidly into disobedience, defiance, and resistance. Without intending to do so, the elderly lawyers who wore gowns and wigs set fire to the powder train of the greatest revolution in history.

CHAPTER XXXIX

LAST YEARS OF LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH

AS the old king neared his end, the system of which he was the head showed many signs of giving way.

The finances were in the most wretched confusion. The ministers themselves could give no clear account of the public debt. One imposing fact, however, made itself most distinctly obvious: the annual outgo was exceeding the annual income by about 41,000,000 livres.

The Abbé Terray, comptroller of the finances, repudiated nearly one-third of the national debt, and mortgaged the revenues of some departments for ten years in advance.

The system of collecting the taxes was so bad that the farmers-general bought for 23,000,000 livres a tax levy out of which they realized 40,000,000. By allowing certain courtiers to share in the profit, the government contractors could obtain almost anything they demanded.

The king's own daughters shared these bribes. In fact, the farmers-general were absolute masters of the fiscal department. They controlled the royal edicts, the courts, and the taxpayers. Upon the slightest suspicion of smuggling, or of otherwise avoiding the payment of dues, the farmers-general would cause the taxpayer to be thrown into prison. During the long reign of Louis XV. the taxes had grown from 165,000,000 to 365,000,000 livres.

The inequalities in taxation were amazing. The great

mass of the people owned the smallest share of the wealth, and almost the entire expenses of the government fell upon them. About one-fifth of the land belonged to peasant proprietors, and from the little farms of the poor an unjust system of taxation took the greater part of the immense sums which were spent by king, priest, and the noble.

In 1740, Massillon writes: "The people of our country live in misery; they have neither furniture nor beds; during part of the year most of them have no food except oaten bread. The negroes of our islands are happier."

The most moderate estimate of recent historians is that one-half of the gross product of the farm was taken for the king's taxes; after this came the tithes due to the Church and the feudal dues claimed by the noble.

Living upon such a narrow margin as these taxes allowed him, the life of a peasant was a haggard existence at best; in seasons of dearth, starvation was bound to come and carry off wretched victims by the score.

These little farms did not exceed twenty acres; indeed, they rarely contained so much. Farms of ten acres were large for the peasant; those of five acres, of one acre, of half an acre, and even less, were the slender streams from which flowed the wealth of France.

Turning from the always ill-clad, ill-fed, and ill-housed peasant, laboriously digging out of the soil the money needed by the king and his courtiers, let us see the size of the domains owned by those who were almost wholly excused from paying taxes; and not only that, but who were, by way of pensions, gifts, salaries, perquisites, and feudal dues, receiving a very large share of the taxes paid by the peasants.

Like corporations of the modern State, the privileged classes of France not only escaped just taxation, but were allowed to fatten upon the taxes paid by the unprivileged.

Taine numbers the nobility at 140,000 and the clergy at 130,000; these two orders composed the privileged classes. The peasants numbered about 15,000,000. The remainder were merchants, artisans, professional men, etc.

The princes of the royal family owned one-seventh of the soil of France, with an annual revenue of about 24,000,000 livres. One-fifth of the soil of the kingdom belonged to the monarch.

The personal expenses of the king devoured 40,000,000 livres annually. Madame de Pompadour had her estates, her palaces, and her average of 2,000,000 livres per year, during the nineteen years of her profligate reign.

The great nobles — the Condés, Aiguillons, Bouillons — owned estates which stretched for miles, included populous towns, and equalled principalities in richness and extent. On Condé's estate there was a city of 40,000 inhabitants. The Duke of Orleans had a rent-roll of a million.

Among the higher clergy, the same excess of wealth was found. The archbishop of Rouen had a yearly income of 230,000 livres; the archbishop of Narbonne 280,000; the archbishop of Paris 300,000. There were eighteen archbishops whose incomes were about as large as these, and 130 bishops whose revenues were about 100,000 livres each.

With a cardinal the situation was even more opulent. Cardinal de Rohan enjoyed an income of 800,000 livres, owned a palace equal to the king's, kept 180 horses in his stables, and could seat 800 guests in his banquet halls.

Cardinal Bernis spent 500,000 livres a year, and Cardinal de Bouillon's establishment was equally regal.

While the princes of the Church were thus emulating Dives, the lower clergy, the curés, did all the work, and got almost none of the pay. A majority of these parish priests received less than one hundred dollars per year; many of them less than forty dollars. When the day of judgment arrived, a few years later, these parish priests who had lived in touch with the people and shared their hardships, were among the most ardent revolutionists.

Yet an established institution, hoary with age, continues to stand, year in and year out, by mere force of the fact that it is there. One vigorous push might topple it over, but until that push is resolutely given, it stands.

So low had France fallen in European politics that Poland was deliberately cut up and divided between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, without it being thought necessary to consult France at all.

Louis, in his indifferent way, merely said, "Ah, if Choiseul were only here!" As for the Du Barry, she asked, "Where *is* Poland?"

While the king was letting events carry him where they would, there were certain scholars, thinkers, book-makers, busily engaged in undermining the foundations of the monarchy.

Montesquieu, Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Holbach were fearlessly assailing established wrong, mercilessly exposing it, and clamorously demanding reform.

The intellect of France had been exceedingly slow in its progress toward independence of thought and expression. No matter how clearly it might appear to literary

men that things were going wrong, both in Church and State, they dared not raise the standard of opposition. Montaigne was probably at heart a sceptic and a rebel, but he let his pen lead him no further than the writing of rambling, good-humoured, and instructive essays, in which he suggests more than he says. There is none of the Jeremiah in Montaigne, none of the Voltaire. He writes in the vein of a shrewd, easy-going man of the world, who realizes that abuses of many sorts exist around him, but who considers it none of his business to become responsible for the universe.

Rabelais may have intended to satirize kings, nobles, and priests in his monstrous stories, and may have been consumed by the fires of a just indignation at the greed, corruption, and hypocrisy of those in authority, but he disguised his attack so completely that even now no one can say with certainty what he meant.

In those days, the fear of harsh and hopeless punishment stifled the voice of protest. It was so easy to get a citizen into prison, and so difficult to get him out again, that it required the utmost intrepidity to nerve the reformer to his work.

Any influential noble, tax-farmer, or priest could secure a "Letter of the Seal," which warrants of arrest were frequently issued in blank. Armed with one of these, the prosecutor could imprison his victims without the slightest trouble. Once in jail, the prisoner might lie there till he rotted, unless he had influential friends who would exert themselves in his behalf. There was no legal machinery by which the prisoner could obtain relief. There was no habeas corpus which the humblest could demand and the proudest dared not refuse. Many and

many a year was yet to pass before the laws would be so reformed that a prisoner's right to demand a speedy trial would be recognized.

Many a poet languished in prison for verses deriding the manners of the great, censuring their morals, or ridiculing their pride. Many a philosopher, his books condemned for heresy, expiated in dark dungeons the crime of wishing to give the people freedom of thought.

The Bastille was convenient, and the Letters of the Seal furnished a weapon which could be used suddenly, secretly, and effectually, to silence any agitator who raised a discordant doubt as to the purity of a royal mistress, the honesty of a tax-farmer, the continence of a priest, or the patriotism and virtue of a nobleman.

Nevertheless, as the French crown gradually lost its radiance, men began to think more freely and to talk more boldly. Reverence for the monarchy wore away as men saw more of its glory depart.

Louis XI. had been bad, but he was strong. Francis I. had been unfortunate, but he was active, brave, liberal, sociable, and manly. Henry IV. had been dissolute, but he was gallant, good-hearted, and victorious. Louis XIV. had been tyrannical, and unfortunate in his wars, but he was a man of power, too strong to be combated by any known method at that time. The perfection of the system which Louis XI. had devised, and Richelieu completed, was that it left to the people no power of initiative. If the army and the officials remained loyal, successful revolt was practically impossible.

But under Louis XV. conditions had been rapidly changing. The good generals had all died, and the French armies had been ruinously defeated wherever they

had fought. The military prestige of the monarchy was gone. The people were ashamed of the army and angered at those who were responsible for its decay.

Again the Parliament had shown that it was possible to defy the king and not die instantly. The suppression of the Jesuits had been accomplished in spite of the royal will. This was doubly significant, for it taught the people that resistance could be made successful, and it likewise pulled down one of the strongest supports of the monarchy. The Jesuits were a bulwark to the throne, no less than to the papacy, for their own interests were involved in checking every democratic tendency in the State. They were dangerous to monarchs who resisted their influence, but between an unfriendly king and the growth of the democratic spirit they could not have hesitated a moment in supporting the king.

A very important factor in the change which was taking place was the listless character of Louis XV. To suppress the rising clamour of discontent would have required continuity of effort, seriously applied, and Louis XV. was the one man who did not intend to make any continuous effort in any troublesome direction. He was quite willing that malcontents should suffer, but others must prosecute. He would not trouble himself about it. He much preferred to cook dainty dishes in a careless, amateurish way, turn a snuff-box out of wood, cultivate lightly a few flowers and vegetables, hunt stags and partridges, rove from palace to palace, or dawdle from one courtesan to another in his own private peculiar seraglio, known in scandalous chronicles as the "Parc aux Cerfs" — the deer park.

While Beaumarchais or Voltaire might be laughing

French royalty away, exposing it to utter contempt and ridicule, Louis would be feasting in that famous room of the Petit Trianon, where dumb waiters served the guests, — the king and his boon companions were not wearing even so much as Mother Eve's fig-leaf.

While the encyclopedists and Rousseau and Holbach might be drilling mine after mine beneath the fortress of royalty, and charging every mine with powder, and laying the match ready to the hand of the incendiary, Louis XV. would be conducting a personal canvass among the noble ladies of his court in behalf of Madame du Barry, who had found favour in his eyes, to the intense chagrin of the noble duchesses and princesses, each of whom had hoped herself to be lifted to the position of Royal Mistress.

Conversing with the Princess de Beauvau, in after years, Madame du Barry exclaimed, "How you all did hate me in those days!"

"Hate you!" replied the princess, "not at all; we only wanted your place."

During the latter half of the reign, the literature of discontent constantly grew in volume and in boldness.

Montesquieu had cautiously examined the "spirit of the laws," and had insinuated, rather than said, that the English system was better than the French.

Voltaire had served a term or two in the Bastille, and had fled to escape other admonitions of the same sort. He had wandered hither and thither all over Europe and into England, a person not liked by the dignitaries of either Church or State. Wherever he went, he talked and wrote incessantly. He was the incarnation of intellectual discontent, and his courage was equal to his activity. Even in flight from persecution, he shot back

burning arrows of ridicule and invective. An exile from France, his books poured across the frontiers like lawless invaders, assailing abuses of all kinds. He hated tyranny in all its forms. He despised superstition in all its varieties. He loved liberty, freedom of speech, of thought, of conscience. His life was one long battle against ecclesiastical oppression, political abuses, and literary frauds.

He was a born revolutionary and innovator. He found the French mind terrorized, the French tongue mute; he found religion degraded to a superstition; he found the world of letters under the dominion of kings and priests.

This state of things he fiercely assailed, and when he died he had lived to see a servile people emboldened sufficiently to rise up in spontaneous enthusiasm and crown him with flowers; had lived to see the terror pass away from the minds of men, and to hear free speech proclaiming at every street corner the doctrines of a new and better political faith.

Reader, think twice before you join the priest in reviling Voltaire. He was a great warrior for human liberty at a time when warfare for human rights meant persecution, meant dungeons, meant banishment, meant, frequently, death. He rent chains which might have bound you and me; let us honour him.

Rousseau is another whose entire life was consecrated to warfare upon the ancien régime.

His "Social Contract" was the Bible of the revolution. Almost a lunatic in many respects, he was a wonderful artist with words, a most inflammable agitator in the world of ideas. He denied the right to private owner-

ship of land; he proclaimed the felicity of a state of nature; he dreamed of a government in which wrong, oppression, and inequality would not be found. Byron called him "the apostle of affliction." Well he might be. He had been under the wheels all his life, and naturally he did not love those who rode at ease in the coach. He hated the rich and the powerful, was insanely suspicious, restless, and irritable.

The political, religious, judicial, and social systems which prevailed at the time were all vicious; artificiality, tyranny, corruption, tainted them all. Therefore Rousseau believed that human misery found its source in bad laws and unnatural institutions. He wanted these artificial barriers to human happiness torn down and natural conditions restored.

Rousseau was in no sense of the word a practical man. He was a dismal failure at everything but book-making. No living creature, man or woman, ever found it possible to be his friend unless distance kept them apart.

Yet while he could not live in pleasant relations with anybody on earth, he was the most passionate preacher of the brotherhood of man that ever breathed.

He told all the world how to live the life angelical; yet the furies drove him onward without a moment's peace. It was only at long range that men could like the mad, fantastic, jealous, and suspicious apostle of universal brotherhood and love.

Very beautifully indeed he taught all the world how to educate children. One would have thought he loved children as a miser loves gold, as a flower loves dew. His book seemed to emanate from a nature filled with

parental fondness, yet, as fast as his own children were born, he packed them off to the foundling hospital, and never afterwards saw them, or let the mother see them. An effort was made by others to trace these children after he became famous, but those who undertook it reported that his offspring could not be identified. But while Rousseau's character reveals these amazing faults and inconsistencies, it is equally true that he had lofty ideals of government and of right living.

"Man is man's brother," said he; "in this world there are no masters and no slaves; or, at least, there should be none. Where now there is nothing but guilty luxury on one side, and hopeless misery on the other, there ought to be equality, love, brotherhood, and happiness."

In his ideal government, the people are at once rulers and subjects. The king is not the State; the people are the State. Sovereign power does not originate with any pompous fraud calling himself the "Lord's anointed"; it emanates from all the people in their collective capacity. Making laws for the State, the people are sovereign; obeying those laws, the people are subjects; sharing in the benefits of government, the people are citizens, all equal before the law.

Sovereign power being vested in the people, the right is theirs to change the laws, the constitution, and the government. The ruler is but the agent, the servant. If the king breaks his contract with the people to govern justly, the people can depose him and select another servant.

The moment a people elect representatives they are lost. They should keep the sovereign power in their own hands at all times. Every law should be ratified by the people directly, not by representatives. The Eng-

lish, he said, were only free during the elections; when the Parliament was once elected, the people no longer controlled the members.

The people, he said, should hold periodical assemblies, in which every citizen should join. These assemblies would resolve the people into the original independence, the government being suspended until these assemblies renewed the contract with the government. At the opening of these assemblies, two questions should first be voted on. The first is this: "Is it the pleasure of the sovereign people to maintain the present form of government?" The second question is: "Do the sovereign people wish to leave the administration of the government in the hands of the present incumbents?"

The fundamental idea is that the leaders of the people exercise such power as the people delegate to them, and that the people can at any time depose these leaders, limit their authority, enlarge their powers, or abolish their offices.

All this sounds commonplace now, perhaps, but there was a startling novelty about it in the days of Rousseau.

His influence upon the political thought of his day cannot be exaggerated. There was a frenzied earnestness about his manner of presenting his ideas, and they burned themselves deep into the hearts and minds of all classes of men. Not realizing the tendencies of Rousseau's teachings, the aristocrats read his books as eagerly as the middle classes.

In assailing the abuses of the governmental system then prevailing, Rousseau was unanswerable. To his indictment against the artificial barriers to human happiness which the privileged classes had built, all impartial

hearers had to answer "Guilty." But it is one thing to diagnose, and quite another to cure.

When Rousseau draws us the picture of man in his natural state, we see at once that he knows nothing of human nature. The ideal men of his ideal State are all good men; every citizen is a patriot and a gentleman. There are no men who want to cheat their fellows in Rousseau's State. No strong man fells the weak; no corrupt man seeks his own advancement at the expense of the State.

The very best men are chosen for office in the State of Rousseau. The evil-minded men are all expelled. What the majority desires done is always wise in the State of Rousseau, and the minority always cheerfully acquiesces, feuds and factions being easily controlled in that happy land.

Honest elections always prevail in the State of Rousseau. No bribe is ever given, no ballot-box ever stuffed, no votes ever thrown out, and none ever repeated.

The human types with which we have grown familiar do not exist in his ideal commonwealth; the human tiger, the human fox, the human hyena, the human snake, are species unknown in those Elysian fields; doves are there, but no hawks; lambs are there, but no wolves; innocence is there, but no guilt.

God deliver us from the man of nature unchecked by fear of punishment, unrepressed by the weight of law and order, untamed by social amenities, unawed by the gospel of the hereafter!

One of the wildest of vagaries is this dream of the purity, inoffensiveness, and general loveliness of the

man of nature. The nearer we come to tracing man back to an actual state of nature, the nearer we come to finding a savage brute, who eats raw meat, wears no clothes, loves dirt, hates peace, wallows in nastiness, and kills the weaker man whenever the temptation and the opportunity coincide.

Diderot was another of the destructive forces which assailed the old régime. Acting upon a suggestion which originated with Bacon and was partly realized by Chambers, Diderot conceived the colossal design of publishing an encyclopædia which should be a vast magazine of human knowledge. He called to his assistance many companion spirits, and in 1751 the first volume appeared, the second in 1752. The clergy cried out against the work, and the government suppressed it and seized the plates. In a few months, however, the government receded from its position, Diderot regained the plates, and by 1757 seven volumes had been published. In 1759, the opposition of the clergy again broke out, and a royal edict annulled the privilege of publishing the work and prohibited the sale of the volumes already issued. D'Alembert lost heart and left him; but Diderot persisted in his labours, utterly regardless of the king's commands. In 1765, the remaining ten volumes were given to the world. Thus for sixteen years had Diderot devoted himself to the great work. With the help of a few friends he had accomplished a vast and useful undertaking, one which gave to France the benefit of whatever was known in science and art, in literature and history, in government and religion, in philosophy and political economy.

At a time when commerce was shackled by all sorts

of tariffs, external and internal, when a boat-load of wheat going down the Seine to Paris paid duties at sixteen custom-houses, and when the French farmer of Artois was not allowed to sell his wheat in the French province of Berry, the encyclopedists boldly advocated the doctrine of free trade.

At a time when the Church and the State composedly regarded the slave-trade as a legitimate business, which must not be questioned, these courageous writers of the Encyclopædia championed the cause of human freedom and denounced the infamous traffic.

All governmental abuses were explained and condemned. The forced labour of the peasants, the royal monopoly of salt, and the unjust method of imposing and collecting the taxes, were subjects which received intelligent and fearless treatment. Remedial laws were suggested for the first time, and many of the reforms afterwards made should be credited to the encyclopedists.

For the immense amount of work done on this work, Diderot received the mere pittance of $600 a year.

Helvetius was yet another who set people to the task of thinking. Having accumulated as much money as he wanted in plundering the people through the means of farming the taxes, he left the business and became a philosopher. He entertained freely, drew about him a company of free-thinkers, and in 1759 published a book which caused immense scandal. He contended that the general utility, the happiness of all, was the true test by which conduct must be regulated, and to reach which laws should be framed. Thus an enlightened selfishness, the Church party exclaimed, was to be the rule of conduct rather than the old rule of right and wrong. Hel-

vetius also contended that the only thing which made men prefer virtue to vice was the prospect of advantage. He said men were honest, not because it was right to be honest, but because it was the best policy.

Society was profoundly shocked. The virtuous people, who occupied the high places, made a tremendous noise. The official who had allowed the book printed was summarily dismissed, the book itself was condemned by the Pope and by the Sorbonne, and it was burnt by the hangman. Helvetius was ousted from a small office he held at court, and was made to sign a humiliating retraction.

But the book had gone forth, and no amount of retraction could actually recall it. In their innermost souls many people believed that Helvetius was right in his conclusions. As Madame du Deffand said, "They make so much ado about Helvetius because he has revealed everybody's secret."

A fiercer, darker spirit in this creation of a world of new ideas was Holbach, a German baron who lived at Paris, and who published many books against government and religion.

"The dogma of a future life," he wrote, "is one of the most fatal errors with which humanity has been infested. The religions of the future world have helped the priest to conquer this one."

"He believed," says Perkins in his "France under Louis XV.," "that the Church and the established system of theology had debased human intelligence, lessened human activity, inculcated selfishness, and lowered morality. He declared that nature had taught man to be free, to be happy, to be patriotic, to search for the truth, and to serve

his fellow-man; religion taught him that he was a slave, condemned by God to groan under the rod of God's representatives; that he should remain ignorant and miserable, seeking only his own selfish welfare in a world beyond the grave."

His assault upon the government was equally radical; at that time it was considered fanatical. Even Voltaire dissented from Holbach. In his youth Frederick the Great had written a book against Machiavellianism, and had afterwards put into practice to his own advantage every rascality suggested by Machiavelli. In his old age, he now published a censure of Holbach, whereas he had not a whit more religious belief than the man he censured. He considered Holbach dangerous, not because he denied God, but because he questioned the divinity of kings.

Holbach declared that a nation should decide for itself whether it was well governed or not, and should refuse obedience to a king who did not seek the welfare of his people. He said that kings were made for the people and not the people for kings. "Almost everywhere," he said, "the sovereign is everything and the people nothing, and yet it is rare to find a sovereign who gives himself the trouble to perform the duties of his position."

Besides the philosophers whose names have been given, there were others who were developing new ideas and contributing to the change which was preparing the way for a new order.

Mirabeau, the "Friend of Man"; Quesnel, the father of French political economy; and Buffon, the great naturalist, were original thinkers, tireless expounders, and pioneers of mental progress.

Quite as dangerous to the old régime as the philosophers

were the plutocrats of the middle classes. The tax-farmers, a powerful corporation of sixty members, were immensely rich; many manufacturers had grown wealthy; also many bankers, contractors, stewards of estates, lawyers, merchants, and speculators. The opportunities for stealing were so great in the royal service, and in that of the rich but improvident nobles, that considerable fortunes were made by dishonest servitors.

The rich men of the middle class resented the exclusiveness of the aristocracy. The French nobles were artists in the practice of both politeness and insolence. Toward equals and their superiors they were most exquisitely courteous, and were often kind to their dependents, but toward their immediate inferiors in the social scale they were most insufferably offensive. To the prosperous man of business, who was conscious of his own superiority over the ignorant and incompetent noble, this supercilious attitude of the latter was galling.

Talleyrand said the Revolution sprang from French vanity; there can be no reasonable doubt that the wounded vanity of the French plutocrats had much to do with the downfall of the French nobles.

While these elements of discord are at work, Louis XV. pursues the aimless tenor of his life. How to fill up the day without work is the main question with him.

He idles, he trifles, he floats down the current of an indolent, indifferent, and licentious career.

One night, at three o'clock, the bishop of Orleans was roused by a royal courier, who had in hot haste brought a despatch from his Majesty Louis XV.

The bishop imagined that something terrible had happened. Tremblingly he opened the package and read: —

"Monsieur the Bishop of Orleans: my daughters wish for some preserved Orleans quinces. Pray send some. If you have none, I beg that you will . . ."

In this part of the letter there was a drawing of a sedan-chair, and underneath the chair the king's letter continued thus: —

"Send immediately into your episcopal town and get them; and, Monsieur the Bishop, may God have you in his holy keeping. LOUIS."

Lower down on the page was this postscript: —

"The sedan-chair does not mean anything; it was drawn by my daughter on this sheet of paper, which I happened to find near me."

Greatly relieved, the bishop hurried a courier into Orleans, procured the preserves, and sent them to his royal master.

The king is amiable with his daughters, and they seem to love him tenderly. He calls them by nicknames, takes a languid interest in their amusements and studies, and once a week he attends a family concert where his daughters perform and his wife and himself listen to the music.

Beaumarchais was their music master; and the king on one occasion gave up his own armchair to the teacher, in order that he might more comfortably play the harp.

This Beaumarchais, being a new man, was hated by the nobles. They conspired against the parvenu and concocted a plan to put a public affront upon him, and as the royal music master had once been a mere humble watchmender, they decided to take up that line of attack. So it happened that the next time Beaumarchais was in a crowd of courtiers, waiting to enter the sacred royal circle, up came a smirking peer, who pulled out his watch

and asked Beaumarchais if he would examine it and see what ailed it.

Beaumarchais was nimble-witted and courageous. He understood. So he said, "I warn you, sir, that I have grown very awkward and may injure your watch."

Nevertheless the courtier insisted, whereupon Beaumarchais took the watch, pretended to inspect it, and dropped it on the marble floor, smashing it badly.

"I warned you, sir, that I had grown awkward," said Beaumarchais, as he walked off, leaving the noble to stoop and gather up the remains of his watch.

With this offended gentleman, or some other, Beaumarchais was forced to fight a duel. He killed his foe and was in peril of punishment. The daughters of the king, taking his part, went to their father and interceded for their teacher.

The king listened favourably, and said, "Arrange it in such a way, my children, that I may not hear of it."

As the view herein taken of the character and mental capacity of Louis XV. is different from that held by historians generally, the remaining pages are given to several well-attested anecdotes, which illustrate what manner of man he was.

It will be remembered that Louis XIV. had bound himself by repeated treaties with England to recognize the new royal house of that country and to cease to harbour the Stuart pretenders. The Regent Orleans had renewed these obligations in favour of the Hanoverian succession and had expelled the Stuarts from France.

Now in 1715 this unfortunate Stuart family, who richly deserved all their misfortunes, had used France as a basis for another invasion of England; and in 1745 they

did so again. The English government naturally felt that France must either be treated as an enemy or must put a stop to these expeditions which were fomented and organized on French soil. Twice had the Stuart Pretender gathered up a handful of followers, crossed the Channel into Scotland, raised the standard of civil war, striven fitfully for his lost crown, been overtaken by disastrous failure, and had fled to cover in France, leaving his devoted adherents in Scotland to bear the pitiless weight of English wrath.

While "Bonnie Prince Charlie" was playing the part of the romantic hero in the salons of Paris, petted and caressed by fine ladies, and passing his time in one continuous round of fashionable dissipation, the brave Highlanders who had left humble homes to fight for him were being bunched like cattle at bloody assizes, and butchered like cattle to sate the vengeance of King George of England. "Bonnie Prince Charlie" danced and drank and revelled in France, but in Scotland the rotting heads of those who had rallied to his call were stuck on pikes at the ends of many a bridge, at the gates of many a town.

England demanded, and Louis XV. promised, that France should no longer harbour this feather-headed adventurer, this disturber of the peace of two great nations.

But the Stuarts were not without influential friends at the court of France. They were Catholics, and France was Catholic. King George was a Protestant, and England was Protestant. Hence the Stuart cause was popular in France. Many secret influences were at work for it. Madame de Pompadour herself was gained over, and she was believed to be all powerful. It was thought

she could prevail on the king to let "Bonnie Prince Charlie" remain in Paris, in violation of the treaty. She urged it on the king persistently, so much so that at length he replied angrily: "What would you have me do, madame? Must I ruin my kingdom because the son of the Chevalier de St. George likes to live in Paris?"

Resisting all the public clamour in the Stuart cause, clamour which was loud in the theatres, in the streets, and in the palace itself, Louis had the Pretender arrested and sent away.

The more this incident is studied, the deeper will be the conviction that the king was not a mere trifler, coffee maker, tapestry weaver, or debauchee. He was all these, but he was also in many ways a king.

Here is another anecdote, equally well attested: —

The Marquis de Marigny laid before him a design for the enlargement, embellishment, and draining of the city of Paris. The cost would be 30,000,000 livres.

"And where, M. de Marigny," said the king, "do you imagine I should find the money to carry out your admirable plans?"

"Ah, Sire," Marigny replied, "such a thought would never have occurred to your great ancestor, Louis XIV."

"I wish it had sometimes done so," said the king; "it would then have occurred less frequently to me."

Consider this also: —

Louis XV. clearly saw the progress of the democratic spirit, and realized its danger to the crown. In his letters he deplores the fact that he will be succeeded by a child, "and what can a child do against all the Republicans with whom I have to contend?"

While the struggle with the Parliament was going on,

a courtier of high position said to the king one evening, as he was being put to bed, "You will see, Sire, that this will lead to the convoking of the States General."

The king threw off his apathy in a moment, and seized the courtier by the arm, saying, "Never repeat those words. I am not bloodthirsty, but if I had a brother who gave me that advice, I would sacrifice him to the duration of the monarchy and the peace of the nation within twenty-four hours."

From the king's standpoint, was not this the deepest wisdom? Did not Louis XVI. abandon the reins to the tribune of the people when he called the States General together?

"When I am gone," the old king remarked with a delicate sneer, "I should like very much to know how Berry will pull through with it."

The Berry here alluded to was the heir-apparent to the throne, afterwards Louis XVI., and the "it" was the embarrassment of the royal position. Madame de Pompadour used to say, "After us the Deluge."

There is something appalling in the levity, the unconscious gayety, with which the French nobles rushed to their doom. Warning voices had been raised, but not heeded.

Damiens had tried, in his crazy way, to bring the king to sober thought by sticking a penknife into his side. "Sire," wrote Damiens to the slightly wounded but badly frightened monarch, "I am sorry I gained access to you; but if you do not take the part of your people, you and the Dauphin and many others will perish before many years."

Damiens was butchered, legally and promptly; they

burnt him with red-hot irons, tried to pull him apart with horses, chopped him with knives and axes, tortured him all day long, to the entire satisfaction of the Church and the State, of the lords and the ladies, who turned out in brave attire to enjoy the spectacle, and when the poor wretch at last was dead the nobles dispersed, and never a soul thought twice that his prophecy might come true.

Voltaire had predicted a revolution; Lord Chesterfield had done so; the king himself had done so; it was in the air, and yet the privileged classes laughed and chattered and made love, intrigued and feasted and made merry, put every thought on the cut of a coat, the set of a wig, the phrasing of a jest, the concoction of a sauce, the choice of a perfume, and the seduction of women, who, in most cases, were willing to meet them half-way.

Like a bevy of bacchanals, maddened with wine and garlanded with flowers, the old French noblesse reeled to its doom, riotously gay to the last. It was as though a carnival, rollicking through sunny avenues, had met the Pale Horse and its rider at the turn of the street, and the shouts of revelry had changed to shrieks of fear and pain — as light, life, and joy were stricken down by swift, appalling Death.

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